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Two Modern Women

Kate Gannett Well

KD 8129

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P. 1 note that husband wants his ~~to be~~ home "near his club"

C. D. Clapp

1,25

TWO MODERN WOMEN

A NOVEL

BY

KATE GANNETT WELLS

PHILADELPHIA
J. B. LIPPINCOTT COMPANY
1890

KD 8129

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CONTENTS.

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	Love-Letters	7
II.	Hunger	14
III.	A Speech	23
IV.	A Search	34
V.	Self-revealing	44
VI.	A Sea Fog	52
VII.	An Individualist	62
VIII.	Forgiveness	73
IX.	A Baptist Meeting-House	83
X.	A Nurse	96
XI.	Piazza Innuendoes	106
XII.	Explanations	117
XIII.	People and Herring	127
XIV.	Failure	136
XV.	A Song	147
XVI.	A Wanderer	155
XVII.	The Women's Union	163
XVIII.	The Unprodigal Father	174
XIX.	The Shipwreck	184
XX.	A Tea-Party	194
XXI.	Appropriation	204
XXII.	Fellowship	216
XXIII.	Opposition	227
XXIV.	An Orphan	239
XXV.	A Woman's Worth	248
XXVI.	A Newspaper Paragraph	258
XXVII.	A Shawl	270
XXVIII.	Easter Sunday	278
XXIX.	"N'Auray Aultre"	282

TWO MODERN WOMEN.

CHAPTER I.

LOVE-LETTERS.

MRS. STANTON had always said that her summer house should be her real home. She had said so when she was a gay girl and estimated nature by the opportunities it offered for flirtations. She loved it unconsciously, however, or she never could have understood its confidences, betrayed through cloud and cove, through granite peaks and sunny, woodland paths.

When she had married, her husband had spoken of taking a house near his club. He had yielded, however, to her wishes when she represented to him that if their home were not in the city he would have more time to live at the club whenever he was in town during the summer, and that in winter they could take apartments next to it. Of course he had done as she wished, supposing that he had decided the matter for himself. And so it came to pass that the little cottage at Campobello, which they had at first owned long before there were any other cottages there, had stretched in length and risen in height until it indicated wealth and intimacy by its spacious halls and cosey balconies. Their first home had been in the country, near Boston, but

there was not any sense of the unexpected in living close to town, so a few years ago they had sought refuge from conventionality and had found novelty in migrating to the loveliest island in Passamaquoddy Bay.

Here sat Mrs. Stanton, one evening in her library, in a straight-backed, carved mahogany chair, for she never rested amid cushions; whether it was from a desire to ward off any curve in her even shoulders, or because she feared that any relaxation of her outward self would lessen the control of her inward being, she hardly knew. Margaret Stanton was complex; her introspective ability had never solved her own complexity. The room was dainty in its appointments rather than rich. It suggested subtlety, illusion; her husband was never at ease in it. She enjoyed its capacities for good or evil. From one corner of it she could watch the fog, stalking like an enveloped form across the inlet, until it laid its wet self on her window panes and made her feel powerless to struggle against the shifting gloom of her life, or to hold any longer her singular, uncomprehended sway over those about her. Through the glass door which led out on to the little piazza, whose high railing prevented the passer-by from discerning whether or not it were occupied, she could look across the bay and gather mental poise from the glories of the sunset. When thus shone upon, she seemed a woman of extraordinary power, one to be worshipped, and her husband always laid aside his cigar before addressing her.

To-night she was alone. A kitchen kerosene lamp gave what light it could over the darkening room. The tall silver lamp might have shed a softer brilliancy,

but Mrs. Stanton was in one of her self-despising moods, when she surrounded herself with signs of parsimony and discomfort. By her side, resting on a long, low bench, was an old-fashioned, black leather trunk, with a brass padlock. She had taken from it a bundle of letters, which lay scattered on her lap as she had read them.

She wondered if Mother Hubbard of nursery fame ever doubted her own identity as she did hers. Her Puritan lineage had always made her endeavor to estimate her happiness as a fixed quantity; commonly it eluded her. As the world counted, the sum was very large, and she rejoiced that it so appeared to the world. She would have given a good deal to have gotten back from her husband her answers to those letters which lay before her. She could not realize that once she must have replied satisfactorily to him, or else she would not have been in this library to-night. She knew she was as true then in answering as she now was in wondering how she could have felt as she did. Then she had said, He loves me; this evening she queried, Do I love him? She was worldly-wise enough to know that she could better bear his failure to care for her than her own to cherish him. She knew that he still admired her; that, long ago, when she had asked him why he loved her, he replied, "Because I never know what you will do next." She was aware that she still held him in the thraldom of proud expectancy.

One note she re-read: there was such a fervor of constancy in it that she laid it on her bosom, folding her hands over it. She felt a shadow darkening her, and looked up to see her husband standing before her.

He bent over her and touched her forehead lightly; as he did so his eye fell on the handwriting, and he leaned forward again and kissed her with tenderness. But the very grace of the action jarred upon her, for it had none of the old time impetuosity. Too haughty or indolent to show either annoyance or surprise, her whole figure slowly relaxed and her face lost its dreamy look as she gave him a welcome, which, though faultless in manner, yet made him recall her once girlish, happy surprise when he came unexpectedly, and which the sight of his own letters now brought vividly before his memory.

"You find me with my treasures,—family letters reduced to the minimum; this little box holds them all,—a few of my parents', the children's, and—yours." The last word was spoken so lingeringly that he drew her to him, asking,—

"Could you answer them now as then?"

"Let me see what I wrote you," she replied, eagerly.

While he was deciding what to answer, she said, disdainfully, "No, keep them; burn them or hand them down to Frank; know me by them or by my present self, it matters not. I put them back and give you the key. Never let me unbury myself again. There are no funeral eulogies to be heard when you are your own priest. Where are my letters to you?"

"In my office." A man's reply.

"Are they indexed and filed away as bills? Edgar," said she, abruptly changing her tone and subject, "do you suppose that Frank will soon write such letters? Do you imagine he is doing it now?"

"How can I tell? You should know."

"He no longer admires me or confides in me."

"One would hardly conjecture that you were speaking of your own son."

"Because I never think of him as my son. For me to do that, he would have had to do either a great wrong or to be an invalid, that I might, whichever way it was, blame myself for my defects, transmitted to him. Then I should have pitied him and cursed myself; as it is, he has been my lover; he is my need."

"And what are you to him?"

"An appendix, an unforeseen obstacle, an ancient code, reminding him that the Old Testament text of honor to parents is now translated by love to them, and either maxim is hard for him to follow."

"If you would be more natural in your definitions, you would not find the difference between you and him so great."

"I do not mean to conjure up differences nor to define them in odd terms, but I sit here and think, till the uncertainty of our relations to each other befogs me."

"I see no reason for presuming that they are other relations than the natural ones of mother and son."

"Thanks; those enable me to darn his stockings and give him good breakfasts. I can tell him of any domestic perplexities if such occur. He can talk to me of the conventionalities of society; morality and its natural history I taught him when he was young. But I cannot go to him and say, See me with all my faults, my longings, my unfulfilled ambitions, my desire to have you hold my hand and watch the sunset with me and call me pet names. I used to think it was hard

for nurses when the babies grew too old to go to them in their little griefs, and when they were promoted from the nurse's dining-room to the family table. I have pitied such women because of the social gulf that then existed for them, but now I pity mothers more when the clinging affection of childhood is gone and the mother's arms are empty. It is simply a reminder that, after all, a woman, whether eighteen or forty, needs a lover."

"And that man, whether twenty or fifty, does not need to be assured that love is unchanged; he asks a different kind of love from mother and wife, but that being guaranteed in the nature of things, he takes it on a life-long lease, whose validity cannot be questioned," answered Mr. Stanton.

"You would like a Fidelity bond," she replied, half scornfully. In sadder tone, she said, "I would rather have my son for my intimate friend than any one else. It recalls the nurse of my own childhood, who, when I told her years ago that I was engaged to you, observed, with formal politeness, that she hoped I should never live to regret it, and then added, 'I suppose now there will be a good many more shirts to starch.' She saw the practical only, and I was shocked at her candor and her limitations. Now, it seems to me that a mother simply represents the practical side of life to her son. He no longer sees through her the ideal; that comes to him through some other woman. But the mother still rejoices in him as an opening vision, an increasing possibility of all that is grand and manly; she feels an indefinite partnership with him in his victories, and she forgets that she was ever his guardian, so much has

he become the fulfilment of her dreams and the prophet of her future."

"Why do you not take things as they are? It is the prerogative of middle life to neither look backward nor forward. One cannot do so at any other time, and the present, with its opportunities, is always richer than either the past or the future."

"For the very reason that this room faces both west and south. I call the fog or the sunset, as the mood pleases me. In middle life one looks back on what he might have been, or forward into the dimness. One has friends instead of lovers, and is supposed to be independent, when one is more dependent than ever. This side of the border-land of middle life is well enough, but the other side,—ugh! I forget we are becoming personal and I had promised you a truce in personalities and acceptance of facts instead."

"Take, then, as a fact the certainty of my affection and accept the further fact of your boy's individuality."

She would have argued further if she had not wished to see herself act, and win, as it were, her own applause; therefore she replied,—

"I accept both, as a lady may. What will you have,—Apollinaris and *pâté de fois?*" She rang the bell and gave her orders, no longer as the morbid victim of herself, but as patroness of a knight, and guided the conversation to the *on dits* of literature and country gossip. Her husband, amused, listened and ate.

"I wonder how long it will be before this place understands its capacities. Let them get a few Germans here: they will claim their birthright of ease and

oppress their neighbors for self-support. That reminds me, Wolfgang has returned from Detroit and begun to talk again. He has waxed eloquent as he has grown hungrier."

"And his daughter?" asked Mrs. Stanton.

"They say his daughter is beautiful enough to convert any one to her theories of equality."

"Even in love?" asked his wife.

"Oh, I agree with you," he replied, lightly, "that socialism leads to caravansaries and free love." And he whistled carelessly as, rising, he looked at the moon and then left the room.

Mrs. Stanton still sat there. "Am I faithless, or is he faithless, and to what? Not to me. But I am jealous of my son's faithfulness to an ideal, and I am perplexed at my husband's faithlessness in any ideal." And she too left the room, but by a different door.

CHAPTER II.

HUNGER.

WOLFGANG KRUMM was called by the upper classes a discontented workman; reformers termed him a Nationalist, and he designated himself as the organ of the masses. When in good humor, that is, when he had just succeeded in borrowing money, he had his little jokes about hand-organs, "vox populi," and church organs, "vox Dei." He had moved with his family from town to city, always creating a commotion

wherever he went, and inducing all the hands, whether on a farm or in a shop, to leave. He had lately come to Boston, and would have joined various organizations if he had had the money for the fees. If he went to a meeting, he soon reached the platform from the farthest seat in the hall, and invariably, after a few months, he found himself at odds with the very persons who first led him on to speak. To-day he had gone out early in search of honest work, for his belief in the good fortune that was to come to him through his eloquence had been shaken. His baby had died, just as the babies of other workingmen die. His wife was broken-hearted and had little of the faith in him which he had in himself, and which usually atoned to him for visible comfort. He had grown gloomier as the day grew longer, for even the firm of Stanton & Foxcroft had refused to give him work, though Mr. Stanton had asked him where his daughter was to speak that evening.

At home, his wife was sitting as she had sat all day, one hand resting on the edge of an empty cradle; with the other she clutched at her dress, rubbed her face, or stroked her knee. The fire had gone out, the room was chilly and dark. If it ever had held much furniture, there was nothing in it now except the bare necessities of a table, a bed, and two or three wooden chairs. The door opened, a boy stole in. He crept up to the woman, looked at her askance, peered into the unoccupied cradle, and, as if from force of habit, held out his pinched fingers for warmth to the cold cooking-stove.

"I wish I were dead too, like baby," he exclaimed.

His voice had a shrill sound, which made the chamber, or kitchen, whichever it was, seem still more lonesome.

"I wish I had something to eat, I am so awful hungry; it's nice to be dead and not to be hungry; baby was lots hungry." He put his foot out towards the cradle as if he would kick it.

"Let it alone!" almost screamed his mother. "'Taint 'cause of me you are hungry."

The boy shivered. "'Tain't no use making believe the baby is living," he added, sulkily. "I tell you I'm hungry like as she was; my head is spinning like a broken top." And he fell down in a heap on the floor.

His mother bent over him. In order to do so she was compelled to take her hand off the cradle. Its unwonted freedom of action appeared to rouse her, for she looked at the boy curiously, then fiercely and long at the cradle, till she herself pushed it away with a kind of reluctant loathing visible in her action and face, muttering,—

"We ain't all dead yet, more's the pity." She pulled the baby's pillow and blanket from the cradle and laid the boy's head on the scanty feathers and threw the thin covering over him. Pillow and blanket were the only evidences of former comfort. The little fellow was quiet with the sleep of hunger. The mother softly lifted the cover from the stove and searched among the ashes. There was not even a clinker left which she could burn; there was no coal in the box; no kindlings were scattered about, though one or two shavings still curled themselves in a corner. She opened the closet and looked at its shelves, which held no food save a few cold, boiled potatoes. She took them out and be-

gan to pare them with a rusty knife slowly, carefully, that not even a crumb should be lost by being taken off with the skins.

While she was thus busy, Wolfgang entered. She turned to look at him and then resumed her work. As he approached to see what she was doing, for the room had grown darker, he stumbled against the cradle and swore. The woman shrugged her shoulders. He stumbled over the boy, who stirred uneasily.

"Where's supper?" he asked.

She pointed to the six potatoes for reply. He did not swear in answer. Sometimes silence is worse than oaths; there is no use in swearing against realities. "'Tain't my fault," said he at last, answering as if he had read his wife's mind. "I've been to the shops, but they don't give work. One has got to belong to the other party to get work; they are afraid of us; they think we'll put dynamite everywhere we work. Ha! ha!" and he laughed a loud, bitter laugh. "Let them all go to the devil; the people have got to have their say. The State has got to support us; there is to be an end to starvation and half-pay for a day's work."

The boy, wakened at the first sound of the harsh voice, pulled down his father's arm, which he was brandishing aloft as if it carried a banner, and whined, in a piteous tone, "I'm hungry; are you going to let me die as she did?" And he pointed to the cradle.

The man put his hand on the child as if to strike him, but no human flesh could touch the sharp collar- and shoulder-bones of that gaunt little form and not lift off its hands quickly as if from a spectre. His wrath vented itself in words. "Are you going to die,

and she too?" indicating his wife with a backward motion of his thumb. "I don't want you to," he added, more softly, "but I can't go back on the cause. I've got to live to keep them stirred up; they'd back down if it weren't for me.

"If you don't give me something to eat I'll steal it," said the boy.

Now it was the mother's turn for excitement. These last words roused her. Her throat was hot with thirst and her voice weak with faintness, yet the old faith of her girlhood came back to her. She had endured the misery of poverty and the hobbies of her husband, but neither he nor her children had ever disgraced her or themselves by actual sin. That the words of Wolfgang could incite others to criminal acts hardly occurred to her, for her mind was not trained to reason. When her boy declared that he was going to steal, she thought of the act as something entirely within his control; of the loaf of bread taken, and then—the station-house. She did not trace back her child's readiness for theft to his familiarity with his father's doctrine of the right of the poor to the property of the rich. Her natural mother-heart, a heart once trained in church lines of belief, rebelled at any infringement of her maternal dignity or trust, and she shook her head at him, exclaiming,—

"Don't you, Johnnie. Dying isn't much if you don't go to hell after you are dead. If you do, it burns you to pieces. Look here, now, don't you go and steal anything. Do you hear? say!"

The little fellow, frightened, knowing neither what his mother nor himself meant, said, mechanically, "No,

I won't;" and then, with a burst of feeling, "but, oh, I'm so awful hungry."

"Let him alone, wife," ordered the husband; "there is no use in arguing against an empty stomach. He hasn't got a speck of socialist grit in him, and you have never got rid of your church notions. All the philosophy I've been putting into you don't support you when you are hungry. Just you wait till the good time comes when the capitalists are in their graves and we are living on their fattenings and paying no taxes to their memory nor to the State. Just let the people fix things, and we will make the world what it ought to be.

"Stop, can't you, just for once: she is coming," urged his wife.

"At it again, father?" asked the new-comer. "Talking only makes you hungrier." So saying, the girl calmly seated herself, took off her hat and shawl, and began to laugh.

"She has gone crazy: I knew she would," said the mother, quietly, as she passed her hand gently over her daughter's head.

"No, mother, I am not crazy; but no one wants me. I have been to fifty stores, and when they heard my name, they asked me if I were Wolfgang Krumm's daughter, and when I told them that I was, they called me names and told me to go along, or to get out; that they wanted none of his brood poisoning the girls' minds; that their shops were quiet now, and they were not going to have a rumpus. Bill Jones asked me if I were not the one who made that speech,—incendiary, they called it. I told him that if I did, it was not any

of his business, and that I was proud of it; and they said I had only made matters worse for all the other girls. And I told them that all I wanted was organization among ourselves for self-protection; that I knew nothing about dynamite. But the bosses came round me as I got to talking fast, and they said insulting things to me, and I told them,—oh, I don't know what I said, and then all of a sudden I burst out crying. And then a gentleman came up and—oh, Lord,—well, here I am, and here is some money for you." She pulled her handkerchief out of her pocket and took out some bills and some change and threw the amount on the table.

The little boy, who had been staring at his sister as she talked, now came close to the table where she had thrown the money, and taking a ten-cent piece, hurried out of the room and soon came back with a paper bag of thick molasses cookies. He pushed one of them into his mother's hands, paused a second before the cradle as if through habit to give one there, and then squatted on the cold hearth, munching away as happily as if he had known neither sorrow nor faintness. The cooky dropped out of Mrs. Krumm's trembling fingers as she tried to count the money, while her husband sought to cover it with his palms and slip it into his pockets before she knew how much there was. The daughter, who had thrown her apron over her head and was sobbing violently, now threw it down. She saw her father's motions and, catching the eager, cunning look on his face, guessed his intention, and put both her hands on the table to seize the money. It slid from under her fingers, and her father caught part of it. She still held

the bills under her palms, and her thumbs and little fingers pressed down a few coins.

"Let me have it, child; none of your nonsense; the money is mine; I am the head of the family."

She made no answer, but leaned herself over the table, trying to cover it with her body. Her father endeavored to push her away.

"Wolfgang," pleaded his wife, "let the child and the money alone, it is hers; she will give you your share of it, if you won't spend it in talking and getting the men to clap you. You must not touch her," she urged, as he tried again to push his daughter away from the table.

"Let me alone, wife, I just want a little of that money; you and Freia can have all the rest. I have got to pay an assessment to-night, or the boys will turn me out. Come now, Freia dear, be a good girl and accommodate your pa, just this once."

She neither answered nor moved. "Look here, girl, you have got to mind me." He shook her, but not roughly, for he was very proud of his daughter, and was also very much afraid her.

The girl swung herself out of his grasp and with a quick movement threw the bills and the money which were in her fingers into the stove. Her father stared at her wildly, and then, taking in the full measure of what she had done, as he thought, hissed,—

"Curse your damned meanness! you might have helped your old father, who has taught you how to speak. You might have given it to the cause. You are just as much of a hypocrite as any other devil."

His passion exhausted as quickly as it came; he

snatched his hat and left the room. The girl sank into her chair, again crying hysterically. The little boy stopped eating, got up and looked into the stove, and began to take out the money and put it in his sister's lap. When it was all there safely, he dug his fists into her eyes to stop her tears, whispering, "Father's gone; there wasn't any fire."

"What!" said Freia, starting up, so that the money fell rattling on the floor.

"Hush!" whispered the mother, with a frightened air; "maybe he will hear and come back. No, there was not any fire; if he had known it he would have picked out the money himself. What made you think of doing it?"

"So he should not touch it."

"Where did you get it?"

"I don't know why I have got to tell you. There is enough to give us coal and bread."

"Did you get it honestly?" asked the mother.

"Yes, if you think honesty is any comfort when you are hungry."

"Did Mr. Stanton give it to you?"

"Well—yes—he did."

"For nothing?" said Mrs. Krumm, with such anxiety in her voice that the girl's manner softened as she answered,—

"For nothing. You need not be ashamed of me. Mr. Stanton is honest, anyhow."

"You can get yourself a dress now against your next speech."

"I do not want to speak, and I hate to hear the men stamping and applauding me. I do not believe it is all

true. I guess all rich men are not robbers. Mr. Stanton isn't."

"What will your father do to you if you stop speaking for him?" said the mother, ignoring her daughter's real thought.

"I do not know. When the money is gone I suppose I shall have to go at it again, but I will live like a lady till then;" and she laughed bitterly. "Mother, has Mr. Stanton got a wife?"

"It is nothing to you, any way, if he has. Just put on your shawl and take Johnnie along with you and buy some supper."

CHAPTER III.

A SPEECH.

It was late when the meal was finished, but the mother and her children looked younger than they did two hours ago.

"Johnnie," said Mrs. Krumm, "take this bottle and buy me some kerosene and a paper of needles, and perhaps I'll mend your jacket if we have a light, and get a bundle of wood, too."

"Can't I buy the *Police Gazette*, or a picture-paper?"

His mother hesitated, for she knew how much must be done with the money; but it was long since her little boy had had anything which he wanted, and she consented. Stores are close to tenement houses, so that it was but a few moments before the mending was be-

gun and Freia and her brother were absorbed in the paper. It was the first warm, bright moment they had enjoyed since the death of the baby, who had become more and more pinched until it was starved to death. It is hard to die because there is nothing else to do. For the present hour all recollection of the past was laid aside, though each knew that it remained as the background of existence.

There was a rap at the door, which was pushed open before the knock could be answered. Two rough, honest-looking fellows entered, but stopped quickly, as if surprised at the unwonted look of comfort.

"Well, now, it is too bad to disturb you, such a lot of comfort as you are taking," said one of them; "but the fact is, we've got a big crowd down to the hall, more than we ever had before, and there are some cursed aristocrats too, I expect. Well, you see, the fact is, the ultimate fact," and he gave a short laugh, "that we can't get along without you. There ain't a woman there to speak to-night except old Mollie, and the boys have got used to her whines. They sent us to bring you down before it's over, so as to give a smack to things."

"I can't go," said Freia, whose very figure seemed to shrink and to lose all animation as the man talked.

"That's all nonsense, now. Your father said you must come, or he'd cut you off with a shilling. Not much of a joke, was it? But he wasn't fooling when he sent us, and if you don't come, there'll be the devil to pay. It's his night, and he ain't going to be fooled. See here, now," he added, in a cajoling tone, "we'll give you a ride in a herdic to get you there quick."

"I can't go," she protested, feebly; "you haven't any right to make me go."

"No, of course we haven't, but your father has; you're his girl; he brought you up and gave you an elocutionary education, all for the cause, and you can't go back on him now."

"I am not going," repeated Freia, turning to her mother.

"You'd better do it," replied Mrs. Krumm. "He'll make it bad for us if you don't, as he has sent up for you."

"See here," said the taller man, addressing his companion, "I'll go and fetch a herdic to the corner. It won't do to have any four-wheeled carriage rattling down this alley; you have the girl ready and up there in a jiffy."

"Agreed, if I can make her," answered his friend.

He was very dubious concerning his powers of persuasion. He knew she would do nothing to please him, and that only fear of her father and her devotion to the cause would induce her to accompany him. Still he ventured to try once more.

"Come, now, Freia, that's a good girl; it's all respectable to-night; there aren't any roughs there, and you know, if there were, they'd as lief handle a serpent as touch you."

The girl's form straightened and her look grew determined. He hastened to follow up the advantage he had gained.

"You know you can handle a hall full of folks better than any man going, and if there are any bosses round, you just give them Jesse."

"Oh, I can't go," again she moaned.

"Confound you! what's your father going to say to you?"

The two women shivered. "Hadn't you better go?" urged her mother at last; "and when you come home, I'll make you a cup of tea. Maybe thinking of it will keep you warm."

Freia got up stupidly, took her shawl off a nail, pulled on her bonnet, and went, but not without stooping down to kiss her young brother, who had paid no attention to what had been said, so engrossing was the *Police Gazette*. It gave her an angry satisfaction to think she was of enough importance for any one to pay twenty-five cents for a herdic for her. Why, then, could she not get work?

There was no side-entrance to the platform where she was expected. The hall was large and bare. It was filled with men and women lounging, standing, sitting; evidently they were waiting. As she walked down the aisle they made way for her, and she heard them whispering, "She's come;" "Krumm's girl is going to speak." People sank back into their seats and the room grew quiet. Any other speaker would have been flattered at finding an audience waiting for her, but Freia cared little whether there were twenty or a hundred present. She secretly hoped that her father would not speak to her, and he, when not excited, had lately grown too afraid of his daughter to desire to talk to her unnecessarily. To-night, moreover, he did not like her looks; yet he was sufficiently a connoisseur in audiences to know that if she should speak as she looked the success of the cause was assured, for that evening at least.

Any meeting composed of English-speaking people has a presiding officer. In accordance with this custom, the chairman now pushed forward a wooden seat. Freia tied her bonnet on to it by its crumpled strings, hung her shawl over its back, and sat down in it. The chairman came forward and commanded silence, in a stentorian tone, and, with a smirk and a flourish of his hand towards Freia, began,—

"Men and women,—for you know there is no longer the third and fourth sex of ladies and gentlemen, they are extinct,—men and women,—that is, woe to men when women speak; pardon me the pun, which in this case is very apt. The woman, Miss Krumm, is now going to tell you about the miseries of the world, as a man cannot. That's why I say, woe to men when a woman speaks."

Everybody snickered at the poor joke, which answered its purpose, however, in making each one feel at home with his neighbor.

"Miss Freia Krumm will now come forward."

The girl rose and did as she was bid. There was no sound as she approached the desk, for the class of people to whom she was to speak are chary of applause until their emotions are roused. With them, each time a person speaks he has afresh to prove himself capable of eloquence before any applause is given him. Freia knew this, and the silence did not trouble her. She eyed her audience carefully, as if she were intimate with it. She had nothing new to tell it this evening; she would far rather have been at home in the dingy kitchen with Johnnie. She had occasionally lashed herself into fury, when not inclined to speak, by re-

peating the old jargon of the cause, and she knew she must now do so again. At last she began:

"Why are you here to-night? because the cause has got hold of you, or you of the cause? It makes a difference which it is. In the first case you are throttled, you can't manage yourselves. In the second case you are masters, destroyers of capital, but upholders of a State built on just proportions of labor with freedom for hours of leisure. Labor's holiday and the State's holiday should mean one and the same thing. No man should be another man's master."

Leaving the desk, she came nearer the edge of the platform and continued: "I am not fit to speak to you to-night. I am not here of my free will. Do you expect me to tell you to set fire to the rich men's houses? No; don't you do that, there are some good people in them. This is what I tell you,—that the working-girl's life is a curse. You know who I am,—Krumm's daughter; and just because I am his daughter I can't get any work. Where is the justice in that? With all your fuss about organizing, you have not got me one cent's worth of wages! Our baby died because father couldn't get any work; and why couldn't he get any work? Because he is my father and I am his daughter. That is what is called logic, or heredity. It all means that people are not allowed to speak their minds and have fair play. Bosses take in contract work and give job prices for piece-work, and the weakest girl has the worst time.

"If I never speak to you again, remember that I have steadily done just one thing: that I have made the bosses and the contractors hate me; that I have got

up lots of rows. It hasn't done any good; girls won't organize as men do; they haven't courage; they are afraid to starve. Did you ever see a baby starve? Well, I have, till you could crack its bones before it was dead and stiff. Now, if I had not made those rows, perhaps I might have had work, and the baby could have lived. But the cause of organization must be forwarded, whether or not death comes in the way. We must educate the girls to raise themselves; the bosses won't do it."

"That's so!" came from all over the hall. "Organize!" shouted some one. "Each man his own boss!" called another. "Three cheers for Wolfgang Krumm's daughter!" cried still a third.

The girl's excitement increased, and her words grew hurried and fierce.

"The working-girl is your cause. Right her wrongs. No more slop-work and starvation prices; no more marriages and dead babies. Don't talk to us of love till you can give us respectable homes. Love is only for the rich, where it does not do any harm. Hands off, and we'll be honest. Organize! Don't wait for ministers; let their up-town churches and their stained-glass windows alone. We don't want that kind any more than we want the missionary barns they build for our improvement and make gaudy with painted sentences called Bible texts. We want gardens and fields and summer days, and honest pay for honest work and time to ourselves. I tell you the working-girl is her own enemy. She always has some one else besides herself to support, so she dare not quit work and organize. I know it isn't easy to organize when you

have nothing but cold potatoes to eat. There isn't much of a God, or He wouldn't let things get so mixed."

"No, there ain't any kind of a one," came from somebody in the crowd.

This was the signal for several moments of confusion. The chairman moved about uneasily; though he was proud of the effect Freia had produced, he feared the entrance of the police at any unusual noise. Her tall, commanding figure and her upraised hand produced silence as her tones penetrated to the farthest end of the hall.

"There are four kinds of people,—the capitalists, they belong to the devil; there are hard-working rich people, who tell you God makes things come out even in the end because they themselves have become comfortable; there are hard-working poor people, who marry and have children and don't steal, but grow more and more miserable; and there are the masses. We belong to the masses, and if now and then some one lifts us up and we see a little bit of sky, we sink down deeper than ever and it is all hell. Now, if we clung to each other and were not so mighty careful lest we know somebody who isn't quite as good as we are ourselves, we could do something. Lord! the girls wouldn't speak to me to-day because they wore Newmarkets and I had an old shawl on my back; and then you come here and say the individual isn't any matter; it is only the cause or the organization. I tell you, you are all wrong. The rich people have got the brains, and we haven't. We have got only feelings and clumsy hands. We've got to have bosses if we don't want to starve. The devil or God has fixed it so, and when I see a

great piece of goodness in a rich man, as I did this morning, I think we are on the wrong track; that you and I and the masses are so wretched because we know so little. We'd better hold our tongues and wait till we are not afraid of each other. When a cash-girl isn't as respectable as the girl behind the counter, and she isn't as nice as the book-keeper, we are a long way off from equality and organization. Rich people are not all wrong. I speak what I know."

A sullen silence pervaded the room as Freia sat down. The chairman was out of sorts. He did not want the police, but he did desire that the meeting should go off gloriously and should be told that capitalists were devils, whom the masses must throttle. His sense of the importance of his position, however, sustained him as he said,—

"Men and women, our sister has just told us we are the masses, and she is very correct in saying so, but she might have stated what the masses are going to do to capital when we fix our own hours of labor and have big weddings and social festivities. I won't tire you counting out to you all the agreeable things we're going to do when we get organized, but I'll just bid you good-night and advise you not to get hold of the wrong books about political economy, because most of them are misleading. Now, good-night, fellow-citizens. Labor's holiday is our pass-word." And with a flourish of his hands, as if in mock imitation of a benediction, he parted his flock asunder.

"Freia's crazy, or she's being fooled by some rich man," was the general comment which the girl heard as she tried to get away unobserved.

She was nearly home before her father caught up with her and jerked her roughly by the elbow.

"What's the matter with you? You've got on to the wrong track, and such stuff and nonsense don't go down with us. We've got to cut the throats of capital, and you've got to help sharpen the knives."

"I sha'nt do any more speaking, father. I'm all tired out, and there's no use in your urging me," answered Freia, knowing inwardly that the very next time her father bade her speak she would have to obey.

As they entered the family room, the unusual sight of a lamp on the table and a needle and thread in his wife's hands surprised him, and he exclaimed,—

"Where on earth did you get all this? Did your rich man give it to you, Freia? If it wasn't now such an agreeable surprise, I'd burn it up as I did your money. Eh, now? Been out washing this evening, or had a caller when the girl was out?"

The wife trembled a little, but she had taken the precaution to carry the money into a neighbor's kitchen in case her husband came home and persisted in asking any further questions about it; so she simply continued her work, neither affirming nor denying his remark. She knew that he always came home from his meetings in a talkative mood, so she girded herself with patience to listen to him. Fortunately, this evening he was too full of a plan which had been proposed to him to question further; and as his own hunger had been satisfied by some outside friend, he took it for granted that his family had been fed in the same way.

"Well, I've got a job. Want to hear about it?"

"What's the wages?" asked Mrs. Krumm.

"Wages! why, wages are nothing when there is honor in a job. I'm going to be sent to Pittsburg, all my expenses paid, and a new suit of clothes into the bargain, if I'll go and talk over the boys. They wanted you to go, Freia, but I don't know about it now, since you broke down to-night. You aren't yourself since the baby died."

Neither daughter nor wife spoke.

"Well," said he, after waiting, as he thought, sufficiently long for a reply,—well, can't you speak a word, when I've got some luck at last?"

"What's to become of us while you are gone?" asked his wife, who, having calculated that the money rescued from the coals could not maintain her children and herself more than a few days, was troubled.

"That's just like a woman, not to think of the cause first. Well, really, I don't know. They might let me have a per cent. on the profits of the contribution hats. You won't have me to feed, anyway, and I haven't earned anything to speak of since the campaign began. You see, this is a branch we want to establish, and when we get the constitution and by-laws all over the United States, we shall be independent and equal."

"But until then?" asked she, hopelessly.

"Well, I'll see; of course I can't leave you unprovided, and the men will have to look after you somehow if they send me off and Freia."

"I shan't go, father."

"Oh, come, now. I saw Stanton there to-night: he'll bet on you."

"The sooner you start, the better," said the girl, sharply, with flushing cheeks.

CHAPTER IV.

A SEARCH.

Mr. Stanton did not go down to Campobello the next day as he had intended, but in an absent-minded fashion telegraphed his wife that important business detained him. Later, having recollected the message, he set to work to find out what was his business, and would have liked to send a second telegram explanatory of the first, but concluded that if he did so he would have to give two explanations instead of one.

He had been deeply stirred by what he had seen, more than by what he had heard, the day before. He had grown accustomed to the personal confessions of others and to their private emotions, and to what he miscalled morbid fancies, but he had never before watched the masses *en déshabillé*, as he termed last night's meeting. Freia Krumm was a woman of intense personality; her yellow hair and black eyebrows, her deep, dark eyes, her commanding height and extreme thinness, gave her a prophetic effect. She might have been a Viking's daughter, a child of some early German peasant, struggling against the chains of feudalism; or, again, she might have been a Greek Pythoness, with serpents for her words. He had a great desire to see her again, and wondered if he should not once more like to take her hand, and yet as the thought came to him dimly, he shook himself with vehemence, as if the fancy were intolerable to him.

In a gentlemanly way he had long been interested in the question of socialism in its many phases. At heart he was a refined Anarchist, as far as his cherished eclecticism allowed him to choose one Utopia rather than another. He had a great dislike to personified benevolence, and dreaded charitable people as the bores of existence. Occasionally the newspapers spoke of his liberality, and whenever they did, he bought jewels for his wife and wished a reporter might discover him doing it.

He breakfasted at his club, he lunched there; he dined there this day. Still, the yellow hair streamed across his vision, and the trumpet-like tones pierced his ears. He thought of Prince Krapotkine and of Louise Michel; of Professor Sumner and his Social Classes; of Gronlund and his functions of government, and he was ill at ease.

In the evening he went down to the hall where he had been yesterday, and found it an off night. A few men were there, planning in large, uncertain ways their next strategic point. He pulled his hat over his eyebrows, leaned over on one side to make his shoulders uneven, and tried to send off long whiffs of smoke from his cigar, that he might pass for one of the crowd. They were a shabby, dirty set of men, of all nationalities apparently. Their faces were marked with discontent and envy, though they were well fed, judging by their physique. There seemed to be some doubt about sending off Wolfgang. One of them declared that Freia had sworn that she wouldn't stir.

"We haven't any more use for her," said another. "She went back on us last night. There ain't no blood and thunder to her. Damn her, let her go. Her

father'll curse the capitalists and send them to hell faster than she can."

"The girl's beat out; 'tain't her fault," interposed a third.

"Well, we don't want any of her, nohow," rejoined the first speaker. "This ain't business. Krumm's got to go and set things flying if we furnish the cash. I'm treasurer of this job, and I say we can do it, if he warn't so soft-hearted about his family. Well, I suppose we all of us are when it comes to the pinch, and he won't leave them without a cent. We can assess ourselves extra and send him off for a few weeks. Pass round the hat, boys, we won't take no formal vote."

They lazily handed a torn cap from one to another, so that it came to Stanton. As it passed him, he realized that what he had put in would betray him as not belonging to them, and he therefore slunk down the aisle, unnoticed. At the door he contrived to shield himself, for he was strangely curious to know what would become of Krumm's family.

"Who's been so flush with a bill?" he heard them say, and then, as it was unfolded, "there's a traitor among us, or this bill's no good; none of us have got any V to spare in this way."

"The bill's all right," said the fellow who had been sitting next to Mr. Stanton. "The chap close to me put it in. I saw him. He 's low in his mind by the way he acted. He was here last night and was mighty put about by things and the way Freia talked; there was a strange woman here too. They ain't our kind, and we'll make it hot for them if they turn up again."

"Here's seven dollars," announced the treasurer;

"that will do to begin on, and Wolfgang can clear out to-morrow."

The men began to move, and Mr. Stanton, fearful of discovery, went off, provoked again at his want of caution, which should have made him deposit but twenty-five cents, and thus have given him the opportunity to linger as long as he pleased. In his dreams that night he tried to solve the relation between the geometrical increase of the human race and the arithmetical increase of food, and it resulted in the destruction of Krumm's family.

The next day he inquired in Koppe's Alley about the man, for he had possessed himself of knowledge concerning his whereabouts the first night he heard Freia speak. The man had gone West, he was told, and the family had moved away, no one knew where. They had paid their rent and left an old cradle and some broken furniture.

"Could not the neighbors find out where the family had gone?" he asked.

"Well, no, they couldn't; they had heard it said as how the mother had some relations or some land, they didn't rightly know which, down East. They'd gone off, and might never come back again."

Mr. Stanton inquired of them at the grocery store and at the liquor-saloon. No one knew or cared. That the man had paid some of his debts or had not paid them; that people guessed his wife and daughter might go after him when winter came, was all he could learn. There was nothing left for Mr. Stanton to do but to go home, his important business being checked, which he did in the course of a few days.

His home was far enough away for him to sleep and eat and turn over the monthly magazines during the twenty-four hours of the journey, so that by the time he landed he had forgotten his experience except as a singular incident. The fog, arching itself over the opposite headlands, sent its friendly chill through him as he walked up the steep bank to his house. He always liked this out-door preparation for his welcome home. It stifled undue expectations, and seemed to bring the family life into harmony with the liftings and shuttings-in of the fog. The mist crept after him, bending down the blades of grass and wandering up amid the pines. The thicker it grew, the freer he felt by contrast. As his wife came gladly to meet him, the fog rolled down the bay, leaving the jagged horizon clear, yet only to be soon obscured.

It was an island tea of fresh herring and wild strawberries, with the never-failing roast of cold lamb, the prevailing meat away from the cities, to which his wife summoned him. She had little news to tell: the happy monotony of summer life for those nearing middle-age does not admit of narrative.

"Have you heard anything more of Wolfgang?" asked Mrs. Stanton.

Her husband started. Why had she, among all the persons she knew, selected this special individual for a topic of conversation?

"Yes; they say he has gone West," he replied.

"What for?

"To create enthusiasm and get up enterprises to bring on the millenium. He is a crank of a most dangerous kind."

Just then the *tête-à-tête* meal was broken by the arrival of their son, whose privilege it was to be tardy or punctual, as he pleased. He heard his father's words, and added,—

"His daughter is a great deal more dangerous than he, and is the saddest girl I ever saw."

"Where have you ever seen her?" asked his father, rather rudely, so much so that his wife glanced lazily at him.

"The other day," answered Frank, "when I was in town, at Brady's, up in the work-room. She came in. I should not have known who it was if the foreman had not got her into a row. She walked up to the desk and begged for work, and her voice made me shiver, it had such a thin sound. The foreman told her to sign her name and that he'd try her, but no sooner had he seen her signature than he abused her up and down and told her she had been turned out of all the respectable tailor-shops in the city, because she was famous for getting the girls to strike, and that she had refused to take slop-work prices for piece-work. She told him she would do whatever he said and take whatever he would give, if he would only let her have work. She said that her baby had died and——"

"Her baby?" asked Mr. Stanton, quickly, and again his wife looked at him, but this time very keenly.

"That is what she said, but it might have been her mother's baby, for she spoke of their being starved and frozen, and entreated him to let her stop. He shoved her off; she wouldn't go; and then he took her by the shoulders and pushed her down-stairs, so that she reeled from side to side. I started after her to save her, but

the brute caught hold of me and said she was a regular dare-devil, and that she ought to be arrested as a vagrant. I shook him off, but by the time I got downstairs they said she had gone out the other way, and that a gentleman had caught her as she fell and had carried her into one of the offices, and when she was quiet had sent her home."

Mr. Stanton assiduously picked out the bones from his herring, put mayonnaise salad on the fish, and eat it like a connoisseur.

"What do you know about her, Edgar?" asked his wife.

"Very little," replied her husband, and the tone of each was so smooth and even that each knew the other was uttering half-truths and half-questions. "I wanted to look up Wolfgang, as I had not heard of him for some years. He came into our building to get work when I was out. There was an item in the newspaper that he had come back and was at his incendiary work of words again, so I thought I would hunt him up at his old haunts, out of curiosity. They told me he was at the People's Hall, and I went there."

"What did he say for himself?"

"I did not hear him."

"Whom did you hear?" All this was said still in a careless tone, which misled the son, who never found his mother more agreeable than when she was tilting in a conversational way with her husband. He wondered whether his father would succeed in evading the questions, or she in extracting information. This apparently indifferent grace of Mrs. Stanton lent her her greatest charm and made her usually the winner.

"His daughter spoke," answered Mr. Stanton, as he saw she was awaiting a reply. "I had never heard her before, and she interested me greatly. She is a very wondrous-looking woman, with her yellow hair, and her voice has more timbre in it than any female voice I ever heard."

His wife inwardly rejoiced that she herself had never spoken in public. How could she ever have retained her empire of bewilderment and fascination over others if she had done so? She might have forgotten herself and said too much if she had ever so spoken.

"What did she say?" asked Frank.

"I really don't know. I fancy there was little reason or argument in it, but it was the way in which she said it, in that miserable hall with vulgar men all around, she herself driven to desperation by her experience of the morning and her long-time wretchedness, for she was ghastly."

"Why, she was beautiful!" exclaimed Frank.

"I suppose she was," rejoined his father; and then, with a frankness he had not shown before, he continued, "it was the whole of her personality that affected me strangely. I tried to find Wolfgang the next day, but, as I told you, he had gone West, and she and her family have moved away. You may be sure she is not a girl who will marry in a hurry. She has too much reticence about her to give herself away easily, unless she gets excited; then she can talk."

For the third time Mrs. Stanton scanned her husband, unnoticed by him.

"I wish you could find her and bring her here and help her," said Frank, slowly, to his mother.

"Never."

"You wouldn't say so if you had seen her in that work-room. Why, the other girls actually cowered away from her; the foreman kept her waiting so long before he spoke to her that they had a chance to see who she was, for I heard them say that she was Krumm's daughter, and that if they so much as looked at her they would lose their places; that she had been driven from shop to shop because she was always talking to the girls about organizing for self-protection, and that capital is robbery. Goodness! What a superb figure she had when her shawl fell off!"

"Shawl," said Mrs. Stanton, rather scornfully; "people wore shawls when I was a girl; they are out of fashion now, even for public speakers."

"Perhaps she had pawned her ulster," replied Frank, apologetically.

"How absurd you are, Frank! how absurd you both are! I should think you had found Comte's priestess of humanity, and were her worshippers."

"Mamma, you don't know anything about socialism when it is incarnate in a beautiful girl, and she is poor and down-trodden by her sex. Find her, mamma mine."

"Don't you mean anarchism?"

"I don't care anything about the ism; I only know that week after week I rebel when I come to this island and feel its beauty sinking down upon me and deadening all my earnestness, and you cajole me with the hammock, with your mystic ways and your subtle allusions, and I want to go into the city, where the air is stifling, and men and women are cursing and babies are dying, and money is plenty and bread is wanting."

Mrs. Stanton hid her hands under the hanging table-cloth. Was this the end of the intimacy with her own son, for which she had longed? Was it for this that she had devised grace of dress and of address, to keep him charmed to her side, that now he should call for earnestness? She felt again the half-churlishness with which he had lately drawn away from her solicitude or kiss. She knew that her Nemesis had come to her. Because as a young woman her own earnestness had been thwarted, she had buried it deep within her nature and had overlaid it with all the grace and intellectual subtlety which a skilled woman possesses; yet now her son felt the lack in her of that which she had purposely never shown him, lest she weary him as she had her husband in their early days of married life, and still sometimes did when the tides of self-control were nervously lessened.

Mr. Stanton loved his wife too truly not to divine in part her conflicting emotions. Her awkward self-consciousness made her clasp her hands still more tightly under the cloth as he rose from the table, saying to her,—

"Find her, Margaret, and let us save her from being a priestess or a demagogue of any ism."

CHAPTER V.

SELF-REVEALING.

MRS. STANTON was very much disturbed the next morning when she recalled the conversation of the previous evening, for she was too wise a woman to lay awake at night. With all her capacity for undue feeling, she knew that the extent of a woman's sway over the minds and hearts of others depended largely on her physical health, which she had early trained herself not to impair by sleeplessness.

It was at such times as this, when she was brought face to face with individualities different from her own, that the long outward training she had given herself defended her from her own contempt, for better than most women could she appear gay when disappointment had embittered her spirit. Thus she alone could be the best admirer of herself. Self-respect, after all, is as vital an element in self-preservation as self-conceit is destructive to preservation of one's self in the regards of another. Mrs. Stanton always had in herself this power of self-respect, though her friends said truly that seldom did a woman understand herself so little. To be sure, they only said this after they had known her for some time.

Now Mrs. Stanton found herself confronted with the individuality of the very person for whose admiration she cared most,—her son. She knew she had his filial affection as a matter of conventional or natural inheri-

tance. She had not sought to adapt him to herself for two reasons: first, because, with all her self-respect, she was ashamed of herself; and secondly, because she feared that he might discover that he was thus trained and seek to escape from the thraldom of affection. From his earliest boyhood, she had tried to adapt herself to him, and until lately she had supposed she had succeeded. She had been his playmate or his boon companion, his intimate friend, and his fellow-student. His classmates had been her worshippers, and her home, especially her island home, had been both shrine and confessional for them.

Frank was tenderly proud of his mother; she had never spoken before him of a headache or of her age. She had seemed to him a living goddess of animated intelligence, mirth, and love. He had never seen her in a careless attire, which disillusionized him; and, as she wished to retain his love, she was perfectly sincere in all her adaptations of herself to his moods. His simple, frank, boyish nature had not understood why he had never been permitted to call her mother. She was so utterly absorbed in him that she wished as little recognition as possible of her relation to him, while the fact that he was creator of her mind and heart she would have had stamped into some pet name, by which he might address her. Mr. Stanton, who seldom issued any command, had, however, insisted on the modification of mother into mamma, rather than the adoption of any name which did not express relationship.

The last year Frank had been escaping from her mentally, she knew not how nor where, and this summer she had painfully felt the distance which had come

between them. She had consulted her looking-glass about it, but not him, and she saw that she had lost nothing. She studied him through his friends; she knew Bohemians for his sake; but she could not find the point at which she and Frank diverged. She sought it in one definite thing, whereas it lay in the atmosphere in which each breathed. She lived in him, he in the world of struggle, which became more real to him each day. That her boy could become a philanthropist or a reformer instead of a gentleman and scholar was still something so foreign to her that her misconception of the distance between them remained. She thought she could fill the void by her studies in art and literature. He talked with her easily concerning them, and then went to his own room and tried to reconcile Proudhon and Henry George, the Hampstead Tracts and Herbert Spencer. In order to find concrete applications of theories, he read of strikes and crimes in the newspapers and wandered amid the poverty and cries of the streets and alleys.

If Frank had been older when she was younger, this present separate drifting of their lives might have been avoided. Of course she was happy in her marriage. The morning and evening calm greeting never failed between herself and her husband. Mr. Stanton's whole bearing towards his wife was of a man who admired and feared her, who rejoiced in her wit and grace, who basked in her perfect housekeeping, and from whom all angles of ill-humor disappeared under her suave and courteous presence.

Yet Frank remembered a bitter day when two little girls were carried from the home. His mother had

clung to them, almost lifting them from the casket in her agonized caresses, and then a long, long swoon as the wooden box was lowered into the earth. He recalled months spent with a dearly-loved nurse, when one day she was sent away and he belonged to his mother. What she had suffered, what she had thought, he had never known. He had been taken back to her, with his father's injunction not to speak of that past, which, for aught he knew, had simply become an episode in her life. As he had grown older he had fancied that there were tones in her voice which told of gloom, and that her interpretations of anguish in music were attuned to his new emotions at finding pain in the universe. Yet she never rose from the piano, after such unconscious betrayal of herself, without some light word, which denied what her fingers had worked out with quivering intensity. Because of his own simplicity and the absence of any open confidence between his father and mother, he imagined that when they were alone they told each other everything. He little guessed that the brilliant, light, graceful touch which characterized every speech and motion of Mrs. Stanton's in society and at the home table followed her into the *tête-à-tête* with his father.

Mrs. Stanton was, in fact, a woman who had deliberately set to work to remake herself. She had not trusted to any half-repairs, when she had realized that henceforth she was to live without her baby girls. She had buried her past and risen anew, and now amused herself by the simulated success of her experiment, which, after all, she argued, was bitter common-sense. If one has not courage, or has a feeble spark of the

sentiment of duty still abiding in one's mind, one cannot make way with one's self, and therefore, if one must live, life should be made as comfortable as possible by extinction of whatever occasions undue emotion.

This morning Mrs. Stanton had lost her moorings. Her boy missed in her that part of herself which he had once had, and which now had become distasteful to her. She was almost beyond her own control. She dared not look at herself in the mirror, lest she become exasperated by the reflection of her hysterical indignation. She was the thing she loathed, a woman without repose. She dared not let her domestics see her. Lucy, the housekeeper, she alternately dreaded and pitied, for she was like herself in trying to be what she could not be. The woman had endeavored to keep herself young, till her more or less erect carriage had become a kind of family barometer by which her crossness at life in general was measured. To-day Mrs. Stanton was particularly anxious to avoid Lucy's scrutiny; therefore she must go off, away from the piazzas and the house, and alone by herself seek readjustment to her son.

Leaving word that she was going rowing, she got into her boat. Still mindful of appearances, she plied the oars vigorously till out of sight of her home; then she drew them in and let the tide carry her where it would. It bore her up into an arm of the bay. She could no longer sit still; her heart must free itself from its load of mortification and disappointment by swift exercise. She drew her boat up on to the beach and clambered the rocky hill till she reached a wooden look-out. Up the rickety stairs she went, brought to a pause by the upper landing, beyond which she could

not go. Indignant, she turned around as if to combat this hinderance of prevention, when the breadth of scene lying before her checked her anger, and she grew quiet. The air was rich with pennyroyal scent. Far off in the horizon lay the whole length of Grand Menan from Southern Cross to Bishop Rock, an even stretch of twenty miles, save for two slight depressions of grayish blue, with perpendicular streaks of white clefts up its bleak side; a line of solid strength, yet scarred by its ascent into the upper air of stillness. At its base lay a tiny edge of shining beach; off from the beach across the waters was a land-locked bay, cut into by green headlands, bright with greener patches of oats and tufted by brown haycocks; then a long neck of land rising into the Lubec church-steeple. At its other end it widened out into fields and pine-groves, with their boundary-lines of low hills.

At her left was South Bay, the happiest and most secretive of all the bays along the Maine coast; it played hide-and-seek amid its islands large and small; it ran up into balsam-fir coves; it spread itself out into lagoons of shallow depth; it narrowed itself into clear rivers; the trees interwove their branches from island to island and sent their melancholy sighing from lone topmost boughs to distant comrades. Close beneath her was a farm-house, gay with flowers, and in a patch of carefully-cut grass, fenced in by an iron railing, was a white marble shaft. The beauty of the scene soothed her, its variety satisfied her imagination; gradually she found herself moralizing and likening the view to human life. Annoyed at herself for not realizing the peace of the place unless it led into a moral, she took

a steeper path down the hill than the one by which she had ascended, and came upon the house.

In front of it was a fisherman's boat alive with pansies, candy-tuft, and California poppies. Up the mast clambered nasturtiums. A white cockatoo with yellow crest bade how d'ye do and rang a bell in her honor. On the low stone step sat a girl with hands clasped round her knees. She raised her head with a glance of curiosity, which changed into one of sympathy as she caught the perplexity in Mrs. Stanton's face. She half rose and half moved, as if to make room for the older lady by her side, saying,—

"Take the parrot's greeting, and rest here a while."

Mrs. Stanton seated herself and made some commonplace remark about the flowers, to which she received as commonplace and courteous a reply, but in a voice which carried a welcome in every word, so full, soft, and distinct was it.

They chatted indifferently; the girl told of herself what she might tell to any one: that she had come to this quiet house to escape the noise and heat of the city; how lovely was the stillness, what a good place it was for sleep, and how nice fresh butter and milk were. Mrs. Stanton listened, and was pleased with the talk, which had not even the semblance of wit. She told her in return that she had a house—cottage, rather; no, really, it was not much more than a shanty—at the island round the point, and wished she would row over and see her. They spoke of the old, short canal, full only at highest tide, and what a bother it was to suit one's self to the tide. Then it occurred to Mrs. Stanton that she might be left if she waited longer. The girl

went with her down to the shore, and they found that the tide had gone out on the sloping beach. So they pushed the boat down as well as they could and brought big stones for stepping-places on the wet sand. Mrs. Stanton got into the boat, the girl gave it a vigorous thrust, and it was off, she promising not to stay too long in return when she came to the island. Neither had asked the other's name. "How stupid I was," thought each of them when they had parted.

Mrs. Stanton was quieted, and, as was unusual with her, did not examine herself to find out why she was quieted. She rowed back vigorously, for the tide was against her. Mental energy came to her with every stroke, and when she saw Frank waiting for her at the pier she hailed him as blithely as if she had never known despair or doubt. He handed her out of the boat with the deference and proud gladness due from a grateful subject to a radiant queen. Together they mounted the steps up the bank, and stopped at each square landing-place and picked raspberries lazily from the bushes behind them. Hand in hand, like boy and girl, with swinging gait, they reached the piazza, where guests awaited them, who thought, "Was there ever such a devoted mother and son, and how perfectly they are suited to each other!"

CHAPTER VI.

A SEA FOG.

THE morning had been warm, and the sky and water brilliant in their blue depths of color. Towards the afternoon the horizon had grown misty and a fresh southeast breeze had sprung up.

The girl, who had passed most of her life in cities, knew not how to read the weather signs, and yielded to her impulse for some change from the quiet, happy monotony of the preceding weeks. During that time she had often spent many an hour in rowing round the bay within hail of the farm-house, but to-day a spirit of adventure led her to take the unknown lady at her word and return her call. It was so pleasant to be out on the bay farther than usual, that she dreamily allowed her boat to drift instead of directing her course steadily to Campobello. She scarcely felt that the breeze was growing stronger until her boat was caught amid the currents, which she wrongly thought were caused by the incoming tide. She pulled with all her strength against them and cleared one, only to be caught by another and carried round the point into Lubec Narrows.

Here she was delighted with the swiftness and ease with which she passed the light-house on one side and the herring factories on the other. On sped the boat, she now fancying that the speed was due to her long strokes. She turned her head to see where she was

going, and in so doing one of the oars slipped out of the row-lock and was quickly carried away in an eddy.

Oh, if the current would only swing her into some cove and let her leap from the boat and get ashore as best she could! No, it carried her out into the Bay of Fundy. The boat began to toss about as if it were going to be very rough. She feared she might grow faint and sick before she could decide, owing to her lack of knowledge, in what direction to row with her remaining oar, which she soon saw would avail her nothing. Moreover, the afternoon was wearing away.

As the sea grew more choppy, another dread suggested itself,—that the boat might be dashed to pieces at the bottom of some cliff. Her thoughts alternated between fear and perplexity, philosophy and prayer, resignation and hope. After some time she saw a small sail-boat in the distance. As it came nearer she waved and screamed with all her might. The sail-boat came about. She called again; she must have been heard, for it was close upon her and she could distinguish voices.

Meanwhile, those in the sail-boat were both annoyed and interested, for their experienced eyes told them that a heavy fog was now setting in. If the wind died down, no one could tell when they could get ashore. From their own anxiety they knew that the rower in the boat must also be anxious; and, moreover, the sounds they heard had the uncertain shrillness of a woman's voice. Love of adventure, a possible romance, and human sympathy bade them at least to discover if anything were the matter.

"Whoever is in the boat is a fool or crazy," said one of the men.

"It is a woman," exclaimed the other, the misanthrope of the party. "Can't one ever get rid of a woman? I'll port the helm and clear her; we can't afford to be caught in a fog." And he steered so as to avoid her.

His companion, seeing what he was doing, seized the tiller and jibed the boat so quickly that the boom swung and hit the first speaker.

"Look here, now, there is no fishery question about catching a woman inside the three-mile limit; she has got to be saved."

The fog had thickened around them; no row-boat could be seen.

"There is no use in staying here," muttered the misanthrope.

"I'm captain," said the tall fellow, Frank Stanton. The fog hasn't regularly settled in yet."

As he spoke it lifted and they could discern the row-boat.

"She is not in it," replied the misanthrope, gloomily.

"She is in it or it is murder," shouted Frank, as the sail-boat came nearer.

The fog was gathering in again closer; no sound came unto them; they almost reached the boat, and again the fog closed and she was lost.

"We must be near her; we'll keep on," said Frank.

Once more they tacked, and now the light broke through the mist for a few moments, and they saw a woman's form sitting in the middle of the boat, with quietness in her attitude, gazing into the everywhere of

the fog. The young men breathed quicker, with a sense of awe and relief. They called to her, and her swift movement indicated her glad surprise. Frank brought his boat up into the wind so as to bring her alongside of the row-boat. As the boats touched each other in the growing darkness, Frank shouted,—

"Stand up, I'll pull you in."

"Good heavens, Frank! you'll both fall overboard; it is madness;" and his friend tried to pull him down. But as the young man knelt over the side the misanthrope knelt in the bottom of the sail-boat and clung to his companion's limbs to hold him firmly.

Frank's body was almost over the boat's side, the boat itself rolling heavily. He seized the girl by her arms. The misanthrope knew that he had caught her by the increasing weight. He also knew better than Frank that she was more likely to pull him over than he to pull her in, and all his might was roused to aid him at any hazard. As Frank drew her over the side, his companion drew him downward into the boat, and the three fell in a heap.

"Are you alive, old boy?" asked the misanthrope, Ned Brooks.

"Yes; but how about the woman?"

"All right," said a clear voice.

A sudden breeze springing up, the young men took advantage of it, let the boat fill away on the port tack, and bore towards Lubec Narrows. It was not thirty minutes since they first sighted the row-boat, and yet they felt as if they had grown old. They must get through the Narrows before the wind died down, as they had a head tide. The fog lay all about them and

hid familiar landmarks, yet it gave them space in which to direct their course. No one spoke except as the two men consulted each other. At last they passed the breakwater, and then knew that they would reach home soon.

Fear allayed, curiosity awoke. Whom had they saved? Should they know her if they should ever see her again? Frank was sure that he should never forget the position in which he had beheld her when the clouds revealed her for a moment. Brooks thought, "Just like a woman,—pull her out of a boat or offer her a seat in a horse-car, it is all the same to her; not even a thank you."

The girl was still with the sense of deliverance.

"Are you hurt?" asked Frank at last.

"Not in the least, but you must have been in saving me. What can I do for you?" And she bent forward.

"Nothing," he replied, dryly, "except to sit still."

"Pardon, I forgot."

"Humph!" said Brooks to himself; "pretty easy memory."

But the fulness of her voice struck his ear so pleasantly that he considered Frank's reply too brief, and, as it would be some time before they could reach home, it was just as well to be on free and easy terms. "Do you like fog?" he began.

"Not this kind, it is too wet; I cannot see my boat."

"Of course you can't: she is going straight down the coast."

"Oh! what shall I do? She is not mine."

"You are mighty lucky not to be in her just at this moment."

"I know that. I am more grateful than I can possibly tell you." And she spoke so earnestly and humbly that the misanthrope called himself a brute.

"Oh, that is natural. Your boat will be picked up by some fisherman and brought in. Everybody knows everybody's boat and business here before one knows it one's self."

There was no answer.

"The wind is changing," called Frank. "Keep her up a little and look out for the squalls off Friar's Head."

"Are you sea-sick?" asked Frank.

"Horrors!" thought Brooks.

"No; at least, I will not be," replied the girl.

"Talking is good for sea-sickness. Where do you live?" asked Brooks.

"I have been staying round here this summer."

"Confound her nonsense!" he said to himself; and aloud, "Where are you going?"

"I do not know. Put me ashore and I can find my reckonings."

Plucky or crazy or prudent, was his secret comment. "Supposing we have to stay out all night?" he observed.

"I hope that is not possible. There are still one or two hours ahead of us before night."

Her tones showed signs neither of fear nor encouragement. Frank did not like this covert attack on the girl's reserve, for it was evident that she was a young girl, and not a middle-aged woman; nor did he like

her calmness, which might be the precursor of some insane freak on her part. If she should give a sudden leap from the boat, ought he to try again to save her? To relieve himself from any decision concerning this possible future duty, he bethought him of anecdotes about vessels lost in a fog, and related them, with that want of tact which so often marks embarrassment. It was as evident that the girl listened as that Ned Brooks was bored. He interrupted the narrator, objecting to the dolefulness of the tales, and proposed a smoke, adding, with a slight sarcasm in his voice, "If the lady does not object."

"Not in the least," was the unconcerned reply.

The men smoked, speaking now and then about the boat, apparently forgetting that there was anything peculiar about their experience of to-day's fog. It was growing darker and colder. It was plain that the girl was shivering. Ned, who by this time had come to the conclusion that he had been outrageously rude, and that the girl was courageous, asked her if she had not an ulster.

"Yes, in the lost boat," she replied, with a little touch of merriment in her manner, which soothed his ruffled feelings.

"No duties," said Frank, "on personal clothing; I ought to have captured the coat."

"Ah, but then you should have taken my boat, as that was American; that is, if you are English."

Then they all laughed, and Ned insisted that she should put on his sweater, for, true to his doctrine of self-interest, he told her that he had brought two and needed but one. She put her arms into it, but he had

to help her pull it over her head and across her shoulders. He noticed what a straight, firm figure she had. He insisted on her sitting down in the bottom of the boat, where she would get less wet, and she cuddled herself up into a heap and leaned back against the seat, as if very much at home. Her apparent ease put the men at ease, and they chatted on things in general or were silent, as the mood led them. Ned noticed that she never spoke first. Certainly she was a little "out," but he did not dare again to break her reserve.

They were nearly in when Ned, with whom curiosity always ran a race with misanthropy, went to the bow of the boat and whistled to Frank, who asked the girl to take the tiller for a moment, and went forward, thankful to speak to his friend unheard by her.

"What are you going to do with her?" asked Frank instantly.

"She ought to take care of herself, she's so mighty cool," replied Ned.

"You didn't make much headway with her," his friend retorted. "She's wet through in this fog and rain, and such a girl as that isn't any native. She don't hail from Boston, I bet."

"Not much; she'd have bothered us more if she did, with her notions about propriety. What are you going to do with her?"

"Well, she would better go up to the house, and mother can put her to bed and give her some Jamaica ginger."

"Whew! you don't know her."

"Nor you."

"Yes, I do; ask and try."

"Agreed."

They were now too close upon the shore to admit of further planning; the sheet was let go and the boat swung round; they caught their moorings and brought up the little row-boat attached to it. Who should row in? Both men wished to see what the girl would do.

"Furl your sail," said Frank, "and we'll go together."

Ned looked relieved, and the work was quickly done.

"Come," said Frank to the girl, who leaped into the row-boat. With a few strokes they reached the pier. The girl shook her clothes, took off her hat, and began to pull off the sweater.

"You'd better keep it on," said Frank, "till you—we get home.

"You don't know what to do with me;" and for the first time the girl spoke gayly. "It is a predicament; you've rescued an unknown damsel who can reward you only with words. Do not bother about me any more. I'll get home somehow." And she tugged at the sweater, but it was wet and clung to her. She got it half over her head, where it stuck fast, pinioning her arms above her shoulders. She could not help laughing, and Frank joined her awkwardly, but Ned was still, for he thought he detected an inclination to hysterics in her laugh. He took hold of the sweater and pulled it boldly over her head, wrong side out. The girl's face was crimson as it emerged, and her manner haughty.

"I beg your pardon," said he, with a sudden return to city manners, "but it was necessary."

She bowed, and walked on swiftly in front of them, along the pier and up the hill to where two paths diverged. There she hesitated. Frank took quick

advantage of it and planted himself in front her, saying,—

"I insist on your coming to my mother's house. You are wet through; you'll be sick if you don't take care; she'll see to you. Come this way." He sought to take her hand.

"Go in front," said she, putting her hands under her overskirt.

Provoked, he went forward; she followed. Ned brought up the rear, for he was convinced that she meant to elude them, and he now was determined that she should not. They took the narrow path through the field, across the road, and out again into another field, where stood a house. She could see that it was large, with a piazza in front.

"Boys, is that you?" called a lady. Yes, they whistled in reply. She came to meet them, for she saw some one was with them.

"Mamma," said Frank, stepping back, as if to introduce the girl, "here's some one who needs your care. We picked her up in a lone boat round the island, and she's all wet through."

Mrs. Stanton extended her hand, and as the girl pushed back her hat, which was falling over her face, she exclaimed, "Why, where did you come from?"

"I started to make a call on you early this morning;" there was joy and surprise in her tone; "I lost my oar and floated out to sea, and should have been ——" She stopped, then added, "If it had not been for these gentlemen, this gentleman," pointing to Frank, "who saved me at the risk of their own lives."

"Come in, every one of you, and get your things

off," said she, feeling of each of them in turn. "And you come with me," she added, cordially addressing the stranger.

"Oh, no, I cannot; I can find some fisherman who'll take me home now."

"No, indeed, you will not; you must stay here to-night. They say 'tis going to be a tremendous storm; I have been much worried." And she drew the girl's hand within hers and led her off, for the maiden was trembling in every limb.

"Pshaw!" ejaculated Ned; "she knows it was you who saved her."

"And she doesn't know that you hesitated about it," answered Frank.

"Who on earth is she?"

CHAPTER VII.

AN INDIVIDUALIST.

"TRULY, Mrs. Stanton, I cannot stay," protested the girl. "They will be anxious for me."

"Is your mother with you?"

"My mother! no, I am boarding where you found me, but farmer Drew and his wife might worry about me. Could I not telegraph them?"

"They are miles from any telegraph station. If they knew that you were coming, they will conclude, as a matter of course, that I have kept you. No one worries

about another down here; they take things for granted. You see that it is impossible for you to go, or for me to send them word."

"Will not the fog lift?"

"If it does you shall go back, but I think the storm will increase all night, and that in the morning the wind will have blown the fog away, and you shall then be rowed back."

It was not hard for the girl to resign herself to the inevitable when it came in the guise of a hospitable home and a gracious matron.

"Sleep or read while your dress is drying; then come to me in the library," bade Mrs. Stanton.

The girl, left to herself, soon fell asleep and dreamed that she was trying to find a lost boat. Meanwhile, Frank had eagerly questioned his mother as to her knowledge of the unknown damsel, and had chided her for not having told them of her.

"I did not want to disturb the remembrance of the peace which surrounded her, even by speaking of her," said Mrs. Stanton.

"You should have seen her," replied the son, "when the fog broke so that we could just discern her in the boat; she was like the brooding spirit of trust coming from the deep and rising into the clouds." As Mrs. Stanton smiled, he turned to Ned Brooks for confirmation of his words, adding, "She was like a gray silhouette framed in a halo of light. Don't you think so?"

"It depends on how she eats soup," was the cynical reply.

She proved herself equal to this trial at the late

dinner, for she took her soup by carrying her spoon from the centre to the edge of the plate and then bringing it to her mouth. No accent betrayed her citizenship, no mannerism her occupation.

Brooks, who piqued himself on placing a girl as soon as he sighted her, grew much annoyed at his failure to catalogue her. She belonged to none of the series of women he had known. Her face and manner forbade any thought of coquetry, but her form and voice were calculated to inspire passionate feeling. Determined to discover her tastes or her weaknesses, he craved permission to smoke his after-dinner cigar with the ladies, observing that he knew their guest did not object; for with the want of skill which an alleged misanthrope often possesses, he decided to assume a confidential manner with her.

"It would have been most ungrateful to my preservers not to have acceded to whatever they wished," was the answer, which forbade his assumption of intimacy.

"I feel very much like playing the game of Favorite Authors," observed Ned after a while, in a melancholy tone.

"Absurd," was the general comment.

"Not at all; my stock of English literature is low, and it needs reinforcement. Will you not play?" he said, turning to the stranger.

"Thank you, no. I have never liked any catechism."

"You are not as complaisant as in regard to the cigars."

"Not when acquiescence means furtherance of another's curiosity."

"Are you personal in your remark?" asked Ned, with a slight touch of hauteur in his manner.

"Your inference apparently answers your question," was the answer, given gently, as if the speaker deprecated the slight sarcasm of her words.

Mr. Stanton, who, as well as the others present, had guessed the purport of Brooks's proposal, and who in his capacity of host regretted the rudeness, called the attention of their guest to some of the books lying on the large oak centre-table.

Nothing reveals one nature to another more than the manner in which books are discussed. It is not the amount of information shown, so much as the earnestness or indifference manifested, especially if the books under comment are within reach. The very way in which they are handled tells one's regard for them. To Mr. Stanton, books were real beings; he grieved over the paper-covered edition of a good novel as over the decay of an estate. That cheap publications made enjoyment of reading more general in no way consoled his fastidious spirit. He would as soon have seen his wife in a six-cent calico as Matthew Arnold in the "Seaside Library." It was a steady gratification to him that Emerson at a reduced price was not yet for sale at the railroad stations.

"Have you read much of Arnold?" he asked.

"As much as I can of a man who is only half at ease with himself."

"Is he not self-possessed in his 'Sohrab and Rustum?'"

"Oh, yes; but there he is historic, which suits the reserve of the third person. He narrates well; the

climax of human sympathy in the poem is so short that it does not weary him, as a man, to tell what he sees as an artist."

"How is it with the 'Bacchic Chorus?'"

"There his real self appears, and, though I am not a modern Greek, as he is, at heart, I like the chorus, for it is real to him, and is full of resonant vibrations."

"Do you like Shelley better?" he queried, handing her the Forman edition.

"I do, now that I am old enough not to be misled by the languor of his many-syllabled cadences, and can sing with his 'Skylark' or float with his 'Cloud.'"

Mr. Stanton smiled. Bellamy's book, "Looking Backward," was lying on the table. He saw her eyes fall on it, and noted the difference in her expression. "You do not like that?" said he.

"No," she replied, with surprise at being understood.

"Why?" almost imperatively demanded Frank, whose attention now was fully aroused.

"Why?" repeated she, softly; "because he makes existence an outward semblance instead of an inward fact. True, he makes an intelligent self-interest coequal with altruism, but he omits the worship and passivity of man before the glories of nature."

"Yet there must be a better state of things, or we shall all become dynamiters," urged the youth.

"That depends upon our point of view. Most of us take such short focal distances that we are hasty. The stamp of impatience is humanity's birth-mark, and no theorist can afford to ignore that in any reconstructed world of his own."

"The modern theory is, that even Lethean waters

are bitter," interposed Brooks, who had nursed himself back into his misanthropy.

"The masses never have any chance to try those waters; it is work all the time."

"The masses do not feel their wretchedness until they have been told to feel it by the cackling brood of philanthropists," answered Ned.

"There is certainly a great deal of self-analysis that is done for them," said the girl, "which creates in them a belief that their misery is due to others rather than to their own self-neglect."

"And to heredity," added Mrs. Stanton.

"Yes," returned the guest; "but heredity counts for good as well as evil. Just now we look upon it chiefly as a phantasmagoric effect of evil. Instead of saying, 'I will be what I can be,' we say, 'As my father was, I am.'"

"But the masses are starved and goaded into hopelessness," argued Frank.

"Their want of hope comes largely from the excitement which they produce in each other. They lash each other into a frenzy of words, which prevents their acceptance of present conditions, that patience and education alone can cure."

"What do you mean?"

The girl's face had been as fitful in its changes, while she talked, as the afternoon's fog. The straightness of her figure relaxed, its lines grew curved. She sank back in her cushioned seat and folded her hands loosely, looking up in Frank's face, as if she could say something more if she were willing. Mr. Stanton took the arm-chair opposite to her and cut a cigar, while Ned, leaning against the mantel-piece, watched her furtively.

Mrs. Stanton laid aside the crocheting she had been indolently handling, and took the straight-backed chair, which she fancied aided her power of self-control whenever she felt herself agitated. Mrs. Stanton believed that if there were misery for the masses, technically so-called, there was a still deeper misery for individuals who belonged nowhere, though wives and mothers; and she, in her self-imagined wretchedness, had decided that she had not the shelter of the exclusive affection of any one person.

"Oh," said the girl, seeing them all expectant, "perhaps you will not care for a little story, which has haunted me lately, yet its misery is largely self-made, and what Mr.——" and she paused involuntarily.

"Stanton," suggested Frank.

She laughed. "And what Mr. Stanton has said recalls it."

"Confound her!" muttered Ned to himself; "what's her name? She doesn't care to inquire what is mine."

"Tell us all you will," begged Mr. Stanton the elder.

"Last winter," she began, "when I was in the West, I met a stalwart, fair-haired German. He had been in this country before, but had gone back to Europe, and had become connected with some Socialistic paper in Switzerland. Then he went to Australia and was on the newspaper *Honesty*, or *The Radical*. As an anarchist he failed there, as he had in his own home, and so came again to this country, full of wild, sincere enthusiasm, which made him desired as a public speaker. He did agitate finely for those who knew neither the verbal nor the real distinction between the various parties. He argued that when monopolists

have robbed labor and gotten competition into their own hands, they will be the masters of the country; and then again, that the present system is not due to *laissez-faire.* Perhaps he called by hardest names those who believed in the tyranny of State control. In any case, he always moved the masses, of whom we have been talking. At last he got into trouble, because he advocated the recitation of English lessons in the German language in the public schools at the very time when the School Committee had forbidden it. He told his countrymen that they were betrayers of fatherland and freedom if they allowed their children to conjugate 'I love,' instead of '*Ich liebe.*' The police tried to arrest him, but he had fled.

"His wife was a Maine girl, who had seen him on his first visit to this country, when he was a young man, and who thought she had married in him a prophet. Her disillusionizing must have been very painful. Their daughter was about seventeen when I knew them, the most strangely sad and interesting person I ever saw, with yellow hair, which changed as she talked. Indeed it did," reiterated the girl, seeing Mrs. Stanton smile.

"She was completely under her father's control," continued the speaker, "and had his fiery nature, intensified into bitterness, for she was hopeless where he was hopeful. Her mother's misery and illness, the death of two or three younger children, and their poverty were torture to her. She hated the rich just because they were rich. Wherever she worked she soon had to leave, for, skilled worker as she was, she formed the girls into social unions, who demanded more pay

and less work, and wanted to boss their own jobs, to use their terms. She came to Boston two or three years ago and went through the same experience. The last baby died only a few weeks since; the girl lost place after place. At the last shop where she asked for work I think they must have been very unkind, for she had hysterics. Some gentleman came to her rescue, and now she and her mother have gone, I know not where. Her father has been sent to Pittsburg by some local assembly to form a kindred assembly there. I heard a report of a quarrel between father and daughter because she would not go with him, and that the last time she was up, as it is called, she spoke in favor of capital, and so was voted out. If it is so, I fear the worst for her. Pardon me for such a long story, only I wish I could find her. I fear I have wearied you," she added, apologetically.

Both Mr. Stanton and Frank looked at her so expectantly and understandingly that she asked, quickly,—

"Why, do you know her?"

"Is the man's name Wolfgang Krumm?" questioned Mr. Stanton.

"Yes; do you know him?"

"I know him, and must have heard her when she spoke that last time to which you refer. Frank has also seen her."

The girl looked at them with astonishment.

"Find her for me—for us," begged Frank, eagerly.

Mrs. Stanton drew closer the folds of her dress. Mr. Stanton's eyes rested with content on the speaker, and Ned Brooks watched every movement of hers with

critical impatience. The girl became suddenly self-conscious, a misfortune so unknown to her that it confused her all the more and made her more bewildering than ever to Brooks, who had seldom seen a simple woman.

"Have I done wrong in telling you?" she asked.

"You are a New-Englander after all, then," surmised Brooks.

"Not at all," Mr. Stanton hastened to say. "I knew Wolfgang a little some years ago. He was in my employ at one time, but I, as a capitalist, and he, as an agitator, could not agree. I soon lost all knowledge of him until, the other day, I heard of him again accidentally, but I never knew much of what you have related. Let me ask you, are you a Socialist, State or Christian?"

"Neither," replied she, so frankly that he questioned further,—

"Nor an Anarchist?"

"No, only so far as I am an Individualist. I mean that I think each one must choose the method for helping himself and others which is best suited to his own development. I want the minimum of State control with the maximum of self-energy."

"Who the deuce are you?" again thought Brooks, rebellious at being puzzled by a woman who had a life of her own to lead, as he now imagined from her last words.

"And that I may be mistress of myself to-morrow, may I now leave you?" she asked, with a grace which proved her conversant with social etiquette.

They all rose as if from a spell, but it was Brooks who opened the door for her and whispered,—

"Forgive me!"

"I do, but for which of your offences?" she rejoined, as she passed outward.

For the sin against the Holy Ghost, came to Ned's memory from a long-forgotten childhood.

The next morning, when, after breakfast, the girl spoke of returning home, each of the two young men claimed it as his exclusive privilege to row her back. However, Mrs. Stanton, who never said that things were not proper, but who never allowed improper things to happen under her surveillance, interposed.

"I am going to row her home myself this time."

"That implies that she is to come to us again," remarked Mr. Stanton, looking at the girl more than at his wife.

"How can I thank you all?" exclaimed she, impulsively. "You have been so good to me. If ever I have a home of my own, may it be my privilege to shelter you if any one of you ever need it."

"Come to us again," entreated Mr. Stanton, in an earnest tone.

"Come now," said his wife, rather imperatively, laying her hand on the arm of her guest, who in turn held out her other hand to Ned. He took it respectfully, though his swarthy complexion could not conceal the flush of mortification—or pleasure—which mounted even to his forehead.

As the two rowed across the bay in the warm sunshine, Mrs. Stanton's constraint vanished, yet when she landed her companion on the beach she said nothing to her about coming again. As she turned homeward, she was annoyed at herself for the want of curiosity

which had befallen her and had prevented her from ascertaining the girl's circumstances, or even her name; but she felt sure that she should soon see her again, and that then she would know what to call her. Such complete ignoring of herself as the girl had manifested seemed to have compelled a polite indifference on the part of her hosts to any desire to ascertain her family relations or address.

CHAPTER VIII.

FORGIVENESS.

THE family life at Mrs. Stanton's cottage went on as usual. Flowers enriched her tables; guests for whom she cared little came and went, finding her more attractive as she grew lonelier within herself. The ladies who stayed with her wrote long letters to their friends instead of reading, and chatted instead of conversing. The men talked of business or trouting, and said nothing about the social problems with which Frank Stanton was beginning to wrestle.

Now and then he doubted if his parents were satisfied with each other; but again, as he saw how proudly his father looked upon his wife, as her wit enlivened the hours, and how trustingly she relied upon his integrity, he thought he was mistaken.

He did not yet understand the significance of the relationship interpreted by the prepositions in and with.

To be satisfied with each other implies an outward attitude; to be satisfied in one another indicates the fulness of content.

Frank was restless. He wanted to go away and probe life for himself, and his mother's yearning for him forbade. It is a hard problem for a young man with general good intelligence and no special aptitudes to decide what to do. Frank was too honest with himself and had too much regard for any possible parish to become a minister in appearance and an essayist in reality. He had studied law somewhat, but gave it up on finding that at the conclusion of any case for which he looked up the references he held an opposite opinion from that which he had maintained in the beginning. Such mutability of thought, influenced by precedents, disproved the power of bare truth. He would have been a physician if his curiosity concerning disease had been greater than his sympathy with it. Once he had fancied he would go on to some paper, but the personalities and the drudgery of journalism alike wearied him.

He had had his little season as a society man, and had despised himself because his superficial self gave so much satisfaction. His intimate life with his mother had nursed his dreams of beauty without giving him the courage to seek for the beautiful through hard work. His income inherited from his grandfather gave him the fancied El Dorado of independence, and yet separated him from the pleasures of earning. He missed a grasp in himself which could fasten him to any one thing besides his home, and that was a relationship created for him rather than by him. His young mind was aching

for want of an object in life beyond the approved studies of English classics; as an æsthete, he was growing to abhor the reading of books about sociology and pauperism, and yet he read them diligently.

The island, with its alternations of ghastly fogs and brilliant sunshine, had made him dependent on outside influences. He wanted to live out a life of *noblesse oblige*, though lately he had begun to suspect that the desire to help should absorb all thought of one's own nobility. He was earnestly in search of some experience which should show him the purpose of his own individual life rather than of life in general. Possibly a certain morbidness inherited from his mother made him seek for intercourse with unfortunate people, rather than with persons of excellent conventional reputation, and gave him an interest in the pathology of the human soul, though he was indifferent to diseases of the physical system.

The last winter he had gone among working-people, though not into their homes, with the innocent and everyday usefulness of a philanthropist. He contrasted the bitter discussions which he heard, especially among unskilled, unemployed workers, and eight-hours' agitators, and the misery which he saw in the rum-shops, with his father's calmness, in regard to what Mr. Stanton considered the equitable claims of the poor, and also with his mother's interest in Bohemian poverty, rather than with wretchedness in its grosser aspects. Unconsciously he was nursing within himself an indignation against society, because of its position towards the unskilled and poor, which society did not deserve.

Wolfgang's intensity had produced a great impression

upon him. The jovial good nature of the man, with his power of invective, and his hostility to any educational process which did not beget instant emancipation of the unskilled from the thraldom of wages, whether poor or good, made him a dangerous teacher for any young, sympathetic mind; and now the story of their unknown guest had given a framework on which his recollection of the German and his daughter clambered towards a determination to find them.

Ned Brooks was not merely the intimate friend of Frank, but of the whole family. He was alike the confessor and the joker of the home circle whenever he entered it. Older by many years than Frank, and younger than Mr. Stanton, he was independent of both and strongly attached to Mrs. Stanton, on whose self-respect he never infringed, though understanding her moods. His acquaintances called him a misanthrope, and he accepted the word as a cover for eccentricities which otherwise he might have been compelled to explain. He might have been the leader of a party; as it was, he chose to be his own master. Always honorable himself, his sarcasm had checked the first steps of dishonor in many a young man to whom afterwards he became a kind of pessimistic mentor. He never gave the highest reasons for doing what was right, but he never allowed wrong to be enacted if it came within the small circumference of his life. In fact, he had no faith in anything, but he had an innate moral sense and an educated æsthetic taste which made him always a gentleman. The pity which girls bestowed upon him amused him, and he in turn nettled them. He liked children, and older women when married. For women

in general he had no use, not that he despised the sex, it simply bored him. He led a weary life, taking it as a matter of course, and called on a friend in Paris or Boston with the same equanimity with which he would have gone to the Algonquin or the St. Botolph Club to see a comrade in his own city.

The beautiful face, the gentle indifference, and the subtle power of the girl whom he had assisted in rescuing had roused his curiosity and made him dissatisfied with himself. He had been ignored, and it piqued him; he had been pitied as a sinner, and not as a genius, and it chafed him. This girl should be brought to terms and compelled to tell him who she was. He would know her through herself alone, and not through Mrs. Stanton. The more he thought of the way in which she had ignored him and of the sweet compassion in her look when she held out her hand to him in parting, the more misanthropic he became, and the more eager to make her atone for the trouble he gave himself in thinking of her. He could endure it no longer. It was some days since the adventure, and he rowed across the bay to see her.

He found her on the beach behind a fish-house, playing with the farmer's children. He saw she was surprised at meeting him, but whether glad or sorry he could not discern.

"Are you going to keep a fellow in the hot sun after he has been rowing hard?" he asked, finding that if he stayed he was expected to allow the constant interruptions of the little ones. "Haven't you a convenient cave for coolness and conversation?"

"I must watch these children," she answered. "Their

parents have gone to Eastport and left them in my charge."

As she spoke she sprang up from the rough stone on which she had been sitting, to disentangle one of them from a large fishing-net in which he had caught himself, who called to her lustily, "Cousin Ruth, come get me out!"

"That's her name, then," thought Ned; "but, bother it! what can I call her?" After waiting in vain for her to return, he asked, "Aren't you coming back here?"

"No; I am going to take them in for their lunch."

"May I not come too? I am hungry."

She did not reply, but he was determined to go with her, even if he had to make friends with the children in order to accomplish his purpose. He succeeded so well in his amicable overtures that they soon talked to him as freely as to her, so that in reality he ushered her into the dining-room instead of her having the opportunity to ask him to enter. The adroitness with which he played host and cut the bread and poured the milk into the mugs amused her. Children are protectors as well as playmates, and she trusted herself and him.

"Come and swing us in the barn," the boys begged, when lunch had long been past.

Grateful for any excuse which could keep him near the maiden, he swung the two oldest children, and then the little girl clamored for her turn, and insisted on Cousin Ruth's holding her while Brooks swung them both, more carefully and joyfully than he would have supposed it was possible for him to do a few days ago. When the push forward brought the swing back to him,

he longed to throw it up high and run and cut under, as in boyhood's days, and have her jump down into his open arms. As it was, he dared but touch the ropes gently each time, sending her off with the small child, and wait impatiently for the seconds to bring her back to him. But they grew dizzy, and went away from the barn, and he knew that he ought also to leave them. Yet if he should never see her again!

"Shall you be here long?" he ventured to inquire.

"My plans are uncertain. I almost wish I knew."

"Do not go until you have wholly forgiven me," he pleaded, not having meant to thus humble himself, but impelled to speak the truth.

"You said that before. I am not quite sure what you mean."

"Don't you know what a brute I was, that I half did not want Frank to stop the boat; that I thought more of my own pitiful little life than of saving you?"

"You exaggerate; you did save me after all, though I grant you were very cross."

"Will you forgive me?" he urged.

"I do not like to have you make such a point of my forgiving you, and I thought I told you so at Mrs. Stanton's."

"Told me so? You did not speak to me at all."

"No, but I held out my hand to you when I left," said she, speaking for the first time with a slight effort, and coloring. "I wanted to beg your pardon and your friend's,—yours especially, for I annoyed you the most for having given you so much unnecessary trouble. I see now how reckless I was in starting to go alone without knowledge of the currents."

"Promise me you will never do it again."

"I can promise safely, as far as your 'it' refers to the currents."

"How did you know you annoyed me? Tell me," he urged.

"Because in the fog my boat must have been nearer yours than you knew, for I heard you say, 'There's no use in staying here,' and then the words were lost; but the tones!" She trembled a little.

"Well?" he beseeched.

"And when I was in your boat, you were not at first—what shall I say?—quite hospitable."

"But I did not know that it was *you* whom we were saving," he answered, with unmistakable emphasis upon the *you*.

"Why! is not any one worth saving?" she replied, with genuine surprise.

It was his turn to be silent. "May I come again?" he still questioned.

"If you wish, yet it is hardly worth your while," she said, regretfully.

"Why?" he urged.

"Do you know," she returned, taking no notice of his question, "that my boat has not come back yet, and the farmer wants it, and I can't go rowing without it."

"Good-by," said he, abruptly, and he left her without venturing to extend his hand.

She drew a long breath of relief and turned back to the children. When in the middle of the bay he pulled in his oars and drifted. The consciousness of new sensations wearied him. He knew nothing about this girl, and yet he cared extremely to win the ap-

proval he was sure she withheld. He had amused the children with a steady vivacity which for years had been unknown to him, and all that he might be near her. He had been quite contented, happy even. His sense of enjoyment amazed him, for she had said nothing that was memorable, and he had not indulged in any epigrammatic sarcasms which tickled his fancy because of their capability of being misunderstood. He would not have had his friends know of the peaceful hours he had spent.

On arriving at the island, he privately offered a sum of money to a fisherman on condition of his finding a lost boat, which might have drifted down the coast.

"I can sell you one cheaper than I can go after a lost row-boat," expostulated the islander. "How can I tell if it is yourn?"

"It belonged to a man—farmer Drew—who lives over there," answered Brooks, pointing in the direction from which he had just come, "and I want to get it for him; he has been obliging to me."

"Oh, well, if you want to pay me to do a friendly job, I might find it. Drew's got a young girl in his house who hasn't any flesh and blood beauty like our girls round here; she's like my new peas, which won't come out of the pods easy."

"Who is she?" inquired Ned, carelessly.

"I don't rightly know. They say she's a summer boarder, and pays pretty well, on condition they'll let her alone. She looks to me as maybe my little girl does who fell sick and died; that is, if there is any such thing as heaven. Well, as I was saying, Drew's boarder looks kind of lonely, as if she were disap-

pointed, like my girl, at not finding more of a population up there. 'Tain't often we pick up in these parts such a job as yourn, and if the row-boat ain't gone to pieces, I'll get her."

He took out his pipe and seated himself comfortably for a long smoke. Brooks knew the man's word could be relied upon more than his apparent ease would indicate, and trusted him.

The next day the boat was brought back. Brooks fastened it to his and went across the bay. The farmer-fisherman was stringing hake-sounds, which were to be dried in the sun and afterwards packed into barrels and shipped to the market, to be converted into gelatine. As Brooks landed the boat on the beach, he asked, "Where's your young lady?"

"She's gone down along for a couple of days. Place is a sight lonesome without her, though she ain't the talkative kind."

"Is she any relation of yours?" questioned he, fearing an affirmative reply.

"Well, no, not exactly; they say a man's wife ain't any blood relation of his, so I s'pose she ain't. My wife's great-grandmother was first cousin once removed to her great-grandfather, but it don't run on my side of the family, you see, and blood gets pretty well thinned out when it starts away back. But we always sort of kept track of one another,—in my wife's family, that is,—and so, when she wanted quiet, she turned up here. Say, now, are you the gentleman my young ones have been talking about? You came up to see them or her, eh, now?" And he laughed heartily at his own joke.

"I came to bring back your boat," answered he, stiffly.

"Well, now, I'm uncommon obliged to you, and so will the young lady be, for she's had to go afoot since she lost the boat."

"You can tell her it is here, then." And Brooks turned away thoroughly out of temper with himself and the fisherman, who called after him,—

"So you don't want to see the children? Well, call again when she is in."

Brooks did not vouchsafe even a nod in return, but strode down the beach in indignant silence at the farmer's loquacity and his own inability to find out the name of the summer boarder without asking a direct question, which his pride forbade, or his sense of honor towards her, as he judged.

CHAPTER IX.

A BAPTIST MEETING-HOUSE.

THE stillness of the morning proclaimed the Sabbath. Everybody was a little late at breakfast, and consequently much more placid. Prolonged slumbers are intimately related to good temper. What mattered the want of punctuality, when brown-bread, fish-balls, and baked beans made the breakfast, and beans baked with a ham-bone, and not with fat pork!

Mrs. Stanton had given up church-going, lest she might become wearied even of the sentiment of religion.

In the Episcopal church, the steady refrain of morning and evening prayer, though couched in noblest language, wearied her. She was never any farther ahead in it one year than another. The orthodox petition prayer astounded her common-sense, Catholicism annihilated her independence, and Unitarianism, as *laissez-faire* in theology, became a dangerous precedent for *laissez-faire* in action. Still she cherished an ideal of what might be the comfort in a belief, though she always limited herself to a belief rather than to belief; and so her spiritual fasting never relaxed. She looked upon the adoption of a creed, at some future time, as a necessity, allowing herself for the present freedom from all church restraint.

To-day she was inwardly more restless than usual; outwardly she was perplexingly delightful, for even if she did not indulge in witticisms her manner was brilliant; like an old gold setting, it enhanced the value of whatever it enclosed.

She needed a long walk, to quiet her perturbation through physical fatigue, and she was also in that contrary mood, when she desired to abuse some one. Her husband was too familiar with her unrest to afford her any relief. His *vis inertiæ* always exasperated her, though she was too lady-like to show all she felt, except as he divined it. At such times he sedulously avoided her. On her son she never vented her disquiet, for the one great desire of her life was to be admired by him as he was by her. She was too much a connoisseur in human hearts not to know the external value of simplicity and repose in influencing others.

Though she saw that Frank had not been as affected

by their unknown guest as had Mr. Stanton and Ned, she was conscious that the stranger had held, at least, momentary sway over them all by her bright calmness, and had also unconsciously given her an unexpected lesson in the misery of complexity. Mrs. Stanton now wanted to find somebody as subtle as herself, who would analyze personality in general without naming any special instance of it. In this way she thought she might obtain further knowledge of mankind, and also the immediate relief of letting herself say disagreeable things about various classes of people and not about special persons.

There was often a curious sympathy between her and Brooks. They liked each other best in their worst moods, and though neither knew it, much of his misanthropy was due to his perception of her faithlessness in a happy, inward life. She was older than he, and, by the power which a clever woman can easily possess over a younger man, she had warped his judgments and checked whatever earlier capacity he might have had for an idealism which could have enriched his existence. She had felt a change in him during the last few days which it was her prerogative to understand, and she claimed him as a companion for her walk. He assented with a polished alacrity which did not mislead her; all the more must he go if unwilling to do so.

They sauntered down the hill, past the herring-houses with their great piles of drift-wood, used for smoking the silvery fish, which, when seen at a distance, hung across the beams of the houses and down from the rafters like rows of bright stilettos. They went slowly

up the steep ascent, past St. Anne's Church on the one side and the Indian encampment on the other, the Great Spirit or the Triune God brooding over both; past the Owen, with its gate-barred entrance and its solemn groves of spruce within, and along the fragrant hawthorn-hedge, which its English possessors had once transplanted here, from love of fatherland.

They strolled down the most lonesome and picturesque road on the island,—the North Road. Wooden houses, low and small, with a kitchen-well and a yard, bedizened with gay cocks, meek hens, snarling dogs, tall, straggling larkspurs, dahlias, and Bouncing Bessies, skirted the queen's highway; for here all country roads rejoiced in acknowledging their allegiance to another power than that of their present American owners, albeit there was no want of friendliness towards the new-comers. Into the middle of the road was dumped coarse beach gravel, in single, separate piles. Across big holes were laid feeble sticks, as proof that tired somebodies had worked out their taxes by mending the highway. Above, on the hills, was a row of stately bay-windowed houses, with broad fields leading up to them. Blooming gardens fenced them in and told of the neatness and comfort which ruled the dairy and the housekeeping. The road took them up-hill and down-hill, along by little coves sentinelled by high cliffs, and by Mallock's Beach, where for generations the ebb and flow of regeneration had been marked by baptism in the cold waters of the bay. The boundary-lines of the horizon had changed with almost every turn they took. Busy, shining Eastport, the far reaches up the St. Croix River, and the long undulating

lines of the New Brunswick hills, with Passamaquoddy Bay always in the foreground, were in unison with the contrariness of Mrs. Stanton's mood, who saw her love for her son through all the possibilities of the future.

They followed the curves of the road, and were sheltered from the sun by purple masses of bare rock rising, as if in layers of petrified gloom, out of brown pastures. A few sheep, with their thin legs suggestive of the small hind-quarters of mutton which furnished the meat of the region, wandered about hunting for a blade of green grass. The path grew narrower until it lost itself in a field, and Havre de Lutre (the old French for Harbor of the Otter), that queer intersecting little bay almost cutting the island in twain, lay before them. Its narrow confines and wooded banks disturbed Mrs. Stanton by their prettiness, and she and Brooks retraced their steps, hardly knowing how swiftly they went, till they again found themselves before the Baptist meeting-house, which could more easily have been converted into a barn than into a modern church.

The singing of Moody and Sankey hymns, with variations, induced them to enter and watch from the narrow, wooden seats what people were doing who apparently cared for Sunday observances. They were chiefly old men and women, though a few freshly-shaven lads, and maidens with large shade-hats, gave a curious society look to the prayer-meeting. An aged man was telling his hearers that for nigh unto forty years he had been making for the port of heaven, and by the grace of God had towed others along with him; but that he had not brought as many sinful youth as

he had hoped; God have mercy on his own soul when he should reach the heavenly shore. Then the people sang a long hymn, and as Mrs. Stanton and Brooks grew familiar with the peculiar intonations, they caught distinctly the words which were sung,—

"Nothing either great or small,
Nothing, sinners, no;
Jesus did it, did it all,
Long, long ago.

"Till to Jesus' work you cling,
By a simple faith,
Doing is a deadly thing;
Doing ends in death.

"Cast your deadly doing down,
Down at Jesus' feet;
Stand in him, in him alone,
Gloriously complete."

Ned felt a supercilious superiority to its sentiment, and Margaret Stanton wondered if it would not be a relief to cease simulating and rely on some one. There came a long pause, and the two, supposing that the meeting had ended, were on their way out, when the sound of a voice made them look quickly at each other, turn back, and stand behind the porch door.

"Dear friends," it said, "we cannot lie still at Jesus' feet; inaction breeds its own decay; we cannot reach heaven's port unless we set sail and keep a straight course; we cannot tow others with us unless the rope which fastens their boat to ours is strong. We must catch every little flaw of the wind to help ourselves and others along. We need bravest action

for ourselves and tenderest sympathy for others. We must feel another's need before it is spoken. There come supreme moments to our life when we rise above the mists that gather at our feet into the very presence of God.

"Such came to me a few days ago, and its peaceful awe surrounds me still. I lost my oar when rowing, and drifted; the beauty of the day made me careless where I went. Then the fog came towards me slowly. I knew not its misleading power till I was absorbed into it. A dread seized me. I was alone on the ocean, and no heavens above. It was very, very lonely, and I wished I were lying with my mother under the green myrtle rather than to go down to the little fishes. I shut my eyes and tried to think of your beaches at low tide. I recalled their melancholy betrayals till the long damp sea-weed seemed to grow kindly and warm to me, and the jelly-fishes showed me how every existence reached out to others in hundred-fold manner, and the sand-dollars told me how foolish had been my cravings for ease, and the little pebbles shone like the precious stones in the Book of Revelation. I grew quiet and opened my eyes. I could see through the fog up into the sky, and then again it came close and breathed upon me, saying, 'Child I have shown unto thee the depths of abnegation and the worthlessness of life. All action is washed out by the tides which come and go, unwilled by you. Now I will carry you into the heights of love.' And a warm breeze blew through the fog, and a little silvery line shone down through it from above, and my spirit laid hold upon it and I rose by it up into God's being. I saw that all that

is above the waters and all that is beneath is His, and I folded my hands and waited for God to do unto me what He would, sure that whether I rose unto Him, as the sunlight does, or sank before Him, as does the sunset, I was forever warmed by His care for me.

"Then I heard human voices, and our instinctive love for human life and its action rushed upon me, and I called for help, and help came through the courage of strong, brave men, who saved me for further work here.

"Dear friends," and the voice grew from its soft, happy tones into clear resonant vibrations, which strung the hearts of her listeners into harmony,—"dear friends, life is opportunity, life is action; God's revealing comes only as we unfold ourselves by action. The perplexities of life are the fogs and human sympathy is the life-saving boat; 'the restful shining' comes only when action leads us into the 'Heart of all.'"

Mrs. Stanton and Ned waited until they were sure that the speaker's words were finished, and then they hurried across the road into a little thicket of fir-trees, for people were coming down the church-steps, and both felt as if their surprise could bear to hear no other voice than the one to which they had just listened. Brooks saw that his companion had a comfortable seat on a smooth rock, and then took a sharp-pointed one for himself at some distance from her. He perched himself on it uneasily, pulled out of his vest-pocket a cigar, cut off its end, lighted it, and began to smoke it; took it out of his mouth and threw it away in disgust. He glanced round furtively, and saw that Margaret was observing him. He sprang up and went

off further, and threw himself down among the soft underbrush, where no one could watch his emotions, if he had any.

It was ten minutes, perhaps half an hour, he knew not which, when, ashamed of his forgetfulness of his friend, yet annoyed by the fact of her present existence, he hastened towards her and found her talking, with her head resting in the girl-speaker's lap. He tried to withdraw unnoticed, but the crackling leaves told of his approach. Mrs. Stanton raised herself and sat erect, but the girl did not take her hand from the lady's shoulder, which struck him as a proof of her maidenly simplicity. Her smile greeted him, but she looked tired. Her apparent fatigue renewed his confidence in himself as a man against her as a woman, yet he stood still as if waiting for information. The girl slightly stirred, possibly to make room for him on the broad rock; at least he so interpreted it, and sat down by her, purposely laying his arm upon the folds of her dress. Did a faint color pass across the paleness of her face, or was it a shadow, caused by the increasing heat of the day? He had her in his possession, and he would not let her go, even if Mrs. Stanton were there, till she had given him some sign by which he could gauge her regard for him. The older lady grew at ease through Ned's apparently natural indifference, relapsed into a more careless position, and looked down into the water.

The stillness of the scene would have led a selfish man with a careless girl to steal his hand forward till it touched hers, but Brooks would as soon have betrayed a disembodied spirit as offered to do to her what

her sweet permission had not first granted, though his whole nature, body and soul, longed to be blessed by her touch. As if she knew his sufferings, she turned and let him gaze on her loveliness; it was but for a second, yet the peace of her spirit thrilled him.

"Thank you so much," said she, "for bringing back my boat. I was very uneasy about it, for mine host's sake and my own. How can I repay you?"

"By letting me come and see you," he answered; and his hand moved caressingly on her skirt, unnoticed by her.

The caress passed so plainly into his voice that it attracted Margaret's attention. Her quick eye, as she turned, caught his unusual expression, and she looked her astonishment at them both, very much as a well-bred society woman reproves a free and easy boy and girl.

"Was it not good in him to bring back my boat," said the maiden, regarding Mrs. Stanton as if she recognized no need for the lady's chiding manner.

"Very," was the dry reply.

The girl felt the change in Margaret's tone, and showed in turn that she was puzzled. Brooks saw at once that his own want of frankness in not having told Mrs. Stanton about the boat was putting both her and the girl into a state of mutual embarrassment, and he hastened to say,—

"I ought to have told you that I found a fisherman who hunted up the boat for Miss——" He hesitated, glancing from Mrs. Stanton to the girl.

"You mean for me?" said the latter.

"Yes, for you, Miss——" And again he paused.

"Why, don't you know my name? How have you both managed without calling me something?" And her hearty laugh banished whatever lurking constraint had been in Margaret's manner, who replied, as gayly as the girl had spoken,—

"You never told us, and we did not like to ask you."

"You have not yet," added Brooks.

"Why, haven't I? Well, it is because a name never seems to me anything but a door-knob, which has to be handled for admittance; when one knows her friends well, one enters without knocking. Then I am apt to coin names for my friends, those I like, just as one does for one's dogs."

"But you will not let us be even door-knob friends, if you do not tell us your name," persisted Mrs. Stanton.

"Mine? oh, mine is Ruth Aften; and your first name is——"

"Margaret; but call me what you will."

"Then I shall give you for pet name, Daisy, ox-eyed Daisy, with your great brown eyes and your auburn hair; so I called you to myself as I left your home."

"And what name have you for him?" asked the lady, pointing to Ned; "and for Frank?"

"Your son is Sir Galahad," she answered, avoiding the first part of the question.

No other reply of Ruth's could have given the mother greater pleasure. She knew its truth, both for herself and her son, too well to feel that there was any flattery in the answer, and she accepted it as homage due for

her enforced hospitality that night when the girl was with her. "Would that the real first name was always like the person who bears it," she answered aloud.

"It tells much more of the character of the mother who gave it than it does of its owner's disposition, as names are given for fanciful, ancestral, or *in memoriam* reasons; there is a difference between the last two,—one is for family pride, the other for personal affection," replied Ruth.

"An earlier generation would have added scriptural to your classification."

"It is better that such are gone, whether as forms of reverence or of thanksgiving; even the name Theodore, beautiful in its signification as gift of God, is too deep for every-day use."

As Miss Aften rose to go, her dress slipped from underneath Ned's arm. He dared neither help her nor speak to her, but stirred his cane moodily among the short grass.

"Come," exclaimed Mrs. Stanton, "we must go too; I know you are bored by our talk."

Brooks, vexed by Mrs. Stanton's words, from fear that Miss Aften might believe them, and yet not daring to contradict them lest he should again become an object of suspicion, sauntered along by their side without speaking. The girl stopped at a little, loose gate and lifted the rope, which served as latch, saying,—

"I am staying here for a day or two; the sick child has died, and the mother needs a maid-of-all-work."

"When you have finished your engagement with her, come to me," pleaded Mrs. Stanton.

"In the same capacity?"

"Hardly," replied the older woman, as her eye ran over the full, rounded outline of the girl's figure, whom she began to suspect was not quite as young as she thought when she first saw her in her short rowing dress. Where did she belong in society? "Come to me as teacher."

Ruth shook her head.

"As friend," said Mrs. Stanton.

"As a morning caller perhaps," was the reply, as she bade them good-by and went within.

"Ned, who is she? What is all this about the boat?" demanded Margaret, turning to him. "Where have you seen her?"

"I rowed up one day."

"You are not circumstantial."

"You want to convict me on full evidence? Well, last week I rowed up to Farmer Drew's to find out her name. I did not succeed, but I found her taking care of some children. They played, ate bread and butter, and she spoke of the loss of the man's boat; so I got old Smith to look it up. I took it back to her a day or two ago when she was not there."

"You corroborate my opinion of the worthlessness of circumstantial evidence," observed Mrs. Stanton as he finished. "Do you suppose she will come to me? Do you think she is a Baptist?"

"I hope not."

"Well, she must be either a Trinitarian or a Unitarian; she is not an agnostic nor an ethical-culturist, that's sure, or I should not have asked her."

CHAPTER X.

A NURSE.

BROOKS was growing uncomfortable. Hitherto he had judged the world and found it wanting; it had little attraction for him, and he assumed misanthropy as his court attire. Now he was being judged and was found wanting; therefore he became indignant, at first with himself, and then that an unknown, middle-aged girl should presume to measure him. He imagined she pitied him for being what he was. It irritated him to be the object of any one's compassion, and especially to dimly suspect that as soon as he came within her presence he should again fall under her sway. Yet he longed once more to see her and to feel himself healed, if only for the moment, by touching the folds of her dress.

He wandered down the road the next morning: aimlessly, said his external man; purposefully, said his consciousness. The entrance to the Episcopal church stood open; men lounged on the grassy sward around it, but their coats, instead of visible shirt-sleeves, showed that in some way they were connected with the open door. To avoid the usual exchanges about the weather, the greeting which any islander always gives to a passing comrade, he turned off into the little grove on the other side and lighted his cigar. A cigar is aristocratic property; the particular one a man is smoking cannot be shared with others. If it is high-

priced, it reminds the smoker of his income and separates him by its odor from the clay-pipe herds of men.

The tread of many feet jarred upon him. He turned to see a procession coming up the hill. Solemnly, irregularly it came. Something covered with a purple cloth, on which was worked a large red cross, was being painfully carried high above the shoulders of the men who bore it. On either side of it stepped along three young girls clad in white. Behind it and close to it came the bent form of a woman dressed in black. By her side, almost supporting her, walked Ruth Aften. Her strong, young arm was around the person's shoulders, and her pace was weary, as if with the weight of her trembling friend. Following them were others in mourning; then many men in couples, in their best suits, and lastly, playing children and a motley crowd of loafers. Ned was indignant: how could Miss Aften thus expose herself to the gaze of the people!

The four men who carried the coffin halted mid-way up the hill and wiped their foreheads and shifted their hands, supporting their burden as well as they could. Brooks started forward almost ready to give a lift, fearful that it might fall back on Ruth. But before he had made up his mind to such publicity they had righted the coffin. It was very disagreeable, he thought: why could they not have a hearse? If he had seen the old, rusty hearse, with the *papier-maché* garlands of flowers carved on its panelled sides, he would not have wondered that the islanders, always tenderly respectful to their dead, bore them aloft. The girls in white put

their hands on the purple cloth, and the procession again took up the march.

It was utterly still. The Indian women in the tent near by took their kettle off the burning wood lest its hissing steam should break the quiet, and the Indian chief bared his head. Silently came down the rector from his house in his white robes and joined the men, holding his prayer-book in one hand, and helping to keep the coffin steady with the other. In front of the church it was put on the waiting bier and borne inside. The wind sighed through the pines, and Ned knew by the breeze which cooled his brows that he too must have taken off his hat. He waited till they came down the steps, marvelling at the skill with which the coffin was taken in and out of the narrow door. Again the rector came forward, and the line of young and old straggled, still in twos, up over the rocky, brown cemetery, strewn here and there with unfenced monuments, past the flat sarcophagi of the Owen family, till they came to an unused corner, where bright wild-brier roses sweetened the quiet gloom. The young girls stood among the trees and sang; the little birds chirped; the earth fell on the coffin. Ruth clasped both arms round the woman and buried the gray head in her own warm neck, that the mother might not hear that sound of supreme desolation, the hardest moment from the second of death to the return home to the empty chamber. As the people came down the road the awe fell off them.

"Well, I've been living here ever since the old admiral died, and I never seen such a spell of sickness afore; it's worser than potato-rot. Burying's expensive," said an

old man, who had never rightly calculated whether births or deaths were the more costly.

Some one hurried past him and caught hold of Ruth. Ned heard part of some quick words, as the woman asked Miss Aften to come to her if she needed her a few weeks hence, and then they were all lost in the bend of the road.

Was Ruth, then, a nurse, a hired nurse,—even if she were not a Baptist? Poverty would have been of little account compared with this. He was glad that at least Mrs. Stanton had never earned her own living. He went down by the Indian tents and home by the beach. It was a slight relief to get his feet wet, and gave him occupation. In the house he listened when the door-bell rang for the sound of her voice, just as if he really expected her.

"How nervous you are!" said Mrs. Stanton to him that same evening.

"Why not invite some young lady here?" suggested her husband.

"Don't, if I am expected to entertain her," interposed Frank.

"What has become of your unknown?" queried Mr. Stanton.

"I did beg her to come," answered his wife, "and she was not sure whether or not she would even call."

"She might leave a printed card, if she did, for she is a nurse," said Brooks, moodily.

They looked at him surprised, as he continued, "There was a funeral at the 'Pool' yesterday, and all the old women wanted to engage her for their babies."

"I remember you always preferred a man nurse,"

said Margaret, calmly, yet instantly congratulating herself, as she spoke, that, if she had betrayed herself on Sunday on the hill-top, she was glad it was only to a nurse. But as she recalled how many noble ladies had adopted the care of the sick as a professional career, she was still sorry that she had been found sobbing.

The home atmosphere had thickened lately. Frank had been reading Bakounine, and was just now inclined to ascribe all the faults of society to the Church. He accepted the Nihilists' reasoning in "*Dieu et l'État*," and was ready to reject any divine authority lest it implied an opportunity for man to exercise power over his brother-man, as derived from Christ, the Vicegerent of God on earth.

"You had much better have started without any religion than imagine that the evils of to-day are due to it. You are inclined to be a Nationalist, simply because you cannot carry on Nihilism in a democracy. You fancy that there is an aristocracy to be destroyed here as in Russia. Opinions are formed nowadays by young men much quicker than is warranted by facts, concerning the nature and outcome of which no one knows positively. Agnosticism is a wise position to assume in politics as in religion," argued Mr. Stanton one day with his son.

"Class feeling can only be destroyed through Nationalism," replied Frank.

"What is that?" asked his mother.

"It is the new name for State Socialism, as that is another name for the discontent and failure, which wants the State to give it what it is too lazy to earn," returned Mr. Stanton.

"You are very unfair, father," exclaimed Frank, with warmth. "If we could get rid of our wealth, we should feel then as the poor man does, who sees us in comfort while he is wretched."

"Perhaps, Frank, that is the reason why you have been wearing old clothes; it is fortunate that your grandfather left your property in trust, or you might give it all away."

"It is the curse of hereditary wealth which makes labor such a grind."

"It is the impudence and the impotence of unskilled labor that is lessening capital," was the reply, in almost as excited a tone as his son's.

At that moment the waitress entered, wearing a white cap. As she put the iced lemonade on the table and left the room, Frank turned to his mother, saying,—

"Why do you make her wear the livery of servitude and keep up these class distinctions in your own house? Why, even if we do not want to eat together, should we not dress alike?"

"Waiters and gentlemen do at your club," she replied, as sarcastically as she could ever compel herself to answer her son.

"I have given up my club. I had no right to have a polished asylum for my idleness and my inefficiency."

"Why don't you go to work on something?" asked Mr. Stanton.

"Why did you not bring me up to work? It is this home which has made me a lotos-eater, a Sybarite, a dreamer."

Mrs. Stanton rose and went to the piano, with more visible effort at self-control than she often manifested.

Her voice was a deep alto, and she sang that luxuriously imploring verse,—

"How can I leave thee!"

"There!" said Frank, impatiently striding up and down the room instead of resting in the arm-chair as usual. "You tell me not to go away from you; you keep me here through your love for me instead of sending me forth to free mankind."

"Frank," answered his mother, running her fingers over the keys, as if in accordance with her thoughts, "I have seen you eager for one pursuit after another, and I have followed you in them all that I might be with you. I will follow you now, even in this. Maria shall not wear her cap. We can wait on ourselves at table, only do not separate me from you." And she left the piano-stool and stood before him as one pleading for her life.

"You do not see your mistake, mamma," replied he, more gently. "You think I owe myself to you and father. It is you who owe me to suffering humanity."

"Rather," said she, still more humbly, "it is we who owe ourselves to you. That girl, that nurse, told me that beauty never died and duty never ceased. It is through my son that I would learn the duty of making his life so beautiful that he should never suffer."

"That is just your mistake, mamma. You have not let me be strong unto myself; you have given me everything but energy, the power to help everywhere, wherever wretchedness is so dumb that it cannot speak, or where it utters itself in stormy words."

"Rather, where nothing better is wanted because nothing better is known. Take it some flowers," said she, pointing to her table laden with pansies, mignonette, and sweet-peas, arranged in glasses which corresponded to their colors.

"You mock me, mamma."

"And you hurt me, Frank."

"Then let us leave here and go back to the city, where the sky is smoky and the air is putrid with disease."

"And have typhoid fever?" she added, with a comical shrug of her shoulders.

"Yes, and send for the island nurse Brooks talks of." And he looked around for his friend, but both he and Mr. Stanton had long ago left the room, one from displeasure, the other from courtesy.

"You may need her when you have reached convalescence; just now your fever of reform is at its height," answered Mrs. Stanton.

"You do not diagnose the symptoms correctly." And he bowed and left her too.

Was this between mother and son, this covert courtliness and sarcasm? she hoping, through her intense love for him, to find some resting-place for her life, thwarted, as she had not yet learnt, through her own too great expectancy and demand of what life gives only to those who ask not for it; he eager, quivering, uncertain, full of longing for noble deeds and self-sacrifices, with neither concentration nor consecutiveness enough to follow any one line of conduct. Again the Nemesis of her life through her boy rose before her. His faults he owed to her, his virtues were independent

of her. No mother's reproach to a wayward child is ever so stinging as that which she calls down upon herself when she sees her shortcomings incarnated into the existence of her son or daughter.

Nor could she turn to her husband. He would neither snub nor praise her; he understood her, and she knew it. It was the same bitterness which Ned had felt in the fancy that Ruth had comprehended him. It is bitter to feel that a stronger nature sees through one's weakness and into one's subtlety of self-evasion. But Margaret Stanton, like many another woman, had to meet her family at the next meal; besides, the basis of her self-respect was her capacity for self-control. Leave the island and go to the unhealthy city! Did her son want to kill her entirely? And her Irishism brought a grim smile over her features. No, never. She knew by years of experience how much more difficult it was to maintain an apparent serenity when hedged in by apartment walls and society conventions. Would Frank now discover that one reason for her preference for an apartment was just because pedlers and poverty were debarred admission?

Where a weaker woman would have taken a dose of bromide and a nap, she took her oars and went across the bay to Farmer Drew's. The exercise restored her balance as it had never yet failed to do. "I must have some one in the house. Any one is better than nobody when a family is ajar with itself; the necessity which each feels for a small amount of ordinary civility makes united a large sum of politeness; and we shall get through dinner better," she argued.

"Is Miss Aften in?" she asked of the farmer's wife, as she went up towards the house.

The woman was raking together the hay, while her husband pitched it into the cart.

"Well, she is or she isn't, according to what you call in. She is all tuckered out any way. She needs to go somewhere where there ain't misery," answered the wife.

"Is not that everywhere?"

"Well, now you have not got any;" and her eyes ran up and down Mrs. Stanton's dress.

As the lady only smiled, she added, "Miss Ruth do say rich people have a misery of their own, but you see the kind she's been seeing takes away the strength. The folks wanted some one, and she went to accommodate."

"Has she another engagement soon?"

"Ther' ain't no young man courting her, if that's what you mean."

"I meant, is she going to another place soon?"

"Not if we can keep her here all winter: we need her bad."

"I thought, perhaps, she would come over and dine with me to-night."

"Oh! you are the kind that has dinners when you ought to go to bed, and treats your stomach as if it hadn't any right to grumble. I don't wonder city folks have dyspepsia."

"But she will have to stay all night: she cannot come back alone."

"All right about that; she's up there."

"Where?"

"In the hay cart; that's what I said about her being in. Miss Ruth! I do believe she's gone to sleep. Miss Ruth!"

The sleeper roused herself as she heard her name the second time, and, perceiving Mrs. Stanton, jumped from the load of hay.

"Well, now," exclaimed Mrs. Drew, "I was saying you were as tired as a sick horse, and here you are frisking like a young colt."

"I am so glad to see you," said Ruth, simply, showing, however, that she was unmistakably pleased.

"Why did you not make me the call you promised?"

"Did I promise?"

"No, or you would have kept it; so I have come for you now to take you home with me for a day or two."

"And I guess there ain't no nursing for you this time," interposed the farmer, who had been silently enjoying the conversation.

Ruth did not yield at first, but the good man and his wife accepted for her, and she went.

CHAPTER XI.

PIAZZA INNUENDOES.

MRS. STANTON stood before her glass. The top light fell upon her, showing the growing droop in the cheeks, the firmer lines around the mouth, and the coming double chin. A few gray hairs were nothing

in comparison with this gradual loss of the round contour of her face. A woman prospers very well till forty-five; after that the impress of every day counts. Margaret Stanton well understood her outward self. She was neither vain nor mortified. She simply recognized that with coming years there was all the more reason why she should sit straight, walk well, and dress perfectly. The art of illusion is very different from the fraud of delusion.

She had had the foresight to choose her admirers along the line of age, from boys to young men, from them to middle-aged men, and now to still older men had she progressed. In a few years she knew she must sink to dependence upon her house and its inmates for the attractive power to bring others around her. In all her calculations she had, however, been noble; she had never overthrown an old friendship nor courted a stranger merely for social reasons. She had never snubbed any one, but had been tender, graceful, and cordial in her relations with all. Few knew so well as herself how to throw deference into an introduction, or how to say pleasant words of approval, even of personal admiration. Now, by greater charm of address and kindliness would she make good the ravages of time; for no one can have so much unnecessary mental suffering as Margaret had had without its leaving its stain upon the face. Her long training of herself stood her in good stead.

To-day she felt the gap between herself and youth more strongly because of their guest. The first time she saw her she thought her a girl. Further acquaintance had convinced her that Miss Aften was a young woman.

Even at that, she must be some fifteen years younger than herself. She had watched her for the last twenty-four hours, and could discover nothing in her which savored of a profession or of a reform.

The day had been foggy and there had been much general conversation, with reading of newspapers and magazines and the quiet afternoon in each one's room, for Mrs. Stanton was not one of those energetic hostesses, who never leave their guests alone, or who encouraged *tête-à-tête* talks between herself and them, though she promoted them among her friends. To be talked out one's self is very different from letting other people talk themselves out.

Miss Aften seemed quite as likely not to reveal herself as did Mrs. Stanton. The family as yet knew nothing of her history, and therefore, when at dinner Mr. Stanton proposed that they should attend the hotel-hop, his wife wondered a little at his daring.

"Will you go, Miss Aften?" he asked.

"If you desire."

"It is as you please; you can stay at home and read to me, as you did to my wife this morning."

"Or go canoeing with me," interrupted Frank, "if it is moonlight."

"Or rowing with me," said Ned.

"It is better for you to go with me to the hop," was Mrs. Stanton's instant decision.

When the evening came and the soft folds of Miss Aften's white surah silk heightened the wonderful happy simplicity of her face and demeanor, her hostess wondered if she had decided wisely. If this were a professional family nurse, rather than superintendent

of some unknown city hospital, it would be very vexatious. There was something about her which forbade curious questions, and Mrs. Stanton found herself compelled to refrain from any remark to her guest about herself, as previously she had not ventured to ask her name. Yet she was sure that the first words about the girl would be, How did you know her? For some reason a tacit silence had brooded over the manner of their acquaintance with Miss Aften, and Mrs. Stanton followed her son's lead too closely to break it.

The doubtfulness of the evening encounter at the hop whetted Margaret's diplomatic skill. She averted all unnecessary comments of friends, and introduced her guest with such care that she quite admired herself. Brooks understood her tactics, and hoped by apparently aiding her to win half an hour with Miss Aften for himself.

"Will you promenade with me?" he asked, as he heard her talking about the weather to a semi-elderly, commonplace woman.

Not wishing to accept, she could not easily refuse him. Then happened exactly what Mrs. Stanton did not wish. Ned offered his arm. It was accepted with a nonchalant ease that surprised even him, who had observed Ruth's every motion with the lazy delight which an oarsman feels in seeing the moon lap the waves through which he moves.

"Will you watch the dancers a moment? This is near enough by the door."

The moment was sufficiently long for every one to have noticed her. She stood, her hand resting lightly on his arm, with as easy a grace, as calm a manner, as

she had worn when he saw her lost in the fog. He had yet to learn that she possessed the rarest power ever given to woman,—the ability to become part of any scene in which she appears and to appropriate unto herself whatever deeper meaning lurks within it.

Her touch on his arm scarcely vibrated to the rhythm of the dance-music, yet it stirred his pulses, and he bent towards her, hoping she would not break the spell of her sweet superiority by accepting his request, though still wishing that he might realize she was like other women, as he begged her to waltz with him.

"Ah, no; I seldom dance," she replied.

"If you refuse me you cannot accept another," he answered, leading her down the hall, away from the dancers.

"I do not want to."

"Do you not like dancing?"

"Oh, yes, I like the dreamy, dual existence of the waltz, the happy swiftness of motion in the polka glide, and the merriment of the old-fashioned dancing-in-the-barn, which I see is the custom here; but that part of life is over for me now."

"Do you regret it?"

"No; I am happier each day."

"What makes you happy?"

Her face grew still for a moment, as if with the birth of a thought she could not speak, and then she said, "Just now I am happy in being in a beautiful home. Mr. Stanton's very books befriend me."

"You care more for books than for people?"

"Just the reverse. Books have not countenances, in spite of all the efforts at bindings, which shall tell

the tale inside. Books refresh me when weary with trying to be both true and polite."

"If you never give yourself a vacation in either duty, tell me why you would not go rowing with me."

"Why? Because I am Mrs. Stanton's guest."

"And so am I."

"Yes; but she did not signify her acceptance for me of your request to me."

"If she had, would you have gone?"

"I think not."

"Then, why do you walk with me here?"

"Because it is not moonlight."

"I have been looking for some sign of conventionality, but I hardly expected this. Who is that man? He has stared at you every time we passed him."

Miss Aften looked up to meet the angry glance of one who gazed at her eagerly. As his eye caught hers, he twirled his moustache and walked off. Sorrow and disdain, hardly contempt, swept across her face, and Brooks even fancied she shuddered.

"Do you know him?" he inquired, in surprise.

"I did once, long ago."

"I am very sorry."

"Do you know him?"

"Only as a man knows other men whom he meets by chance, not more."

"Let us find Mrs. Stanton. Will you oblige me by not speaking of this?" She felt the hauteur in his manner, and added, more humbly, "I ask it for his sake, not mine."

"Forgive me. You make me believe in you wholly."

"Are appearances so against me, because I chanced to see him?"

Brooks did not answer. He could not say to her, that though this man might do for other girls to know, he would not have her come within reach of his presence, smirched with *double entendre*. How he wanted to draw her hand further on to his own arm! The unseen panoply of truth was around her and he could only reply with a smile that set her doubts at rest. It was with much satisfaction that he found her as good as her word in declining all invitations for the waltz or polka. When Mr. Stanton claimed the older man's privilege of dancing the Virginia Reel with her, and she turned laughingly to Ned for his permission, he was more than content with his evening's progress in her regard.

The next morning, in consequence of the urging of her friends, Mrs. Stanton, who had really enjoyed mystifying them, took Miss Aften to the hotel. The piazza wore the gossiping air bred by late breakfasts and sunny days. A practised eye could detect the differences in the various groups. The Philadelphians, who carry their Quaker aristocracy and remnants of Quaker belief with easy, well-bred assurance, and who can neither be imposed upon nor yet impose themselves on others, were in the west corner of the piazza. With them were two or three Bostonians, whose relatives had lessened their conscious narrowness by intermarriage with the courtly Philadelphians. The pretty accent of the Baltimoreans and their gay laugh rippled in the air. The New Yorkers played with their rings, the Bostonians with their books. The Chicagoans were

ranged in chairs along the water-line of the piazza, thinking what a small place is Eastport, compared with Chicago.

As Mrs. Stanton went up the steps, she was aware of a coolness in the human atmosphere which she did not understand. Those who had met Miss Aften the previous evening bowed coldly. An impetuous young girl, who had declared that Ruth was just too lovely for anything, started to speak to her, but was called back by her mother, to hold a skein of yarn which had lain unwound in the lady's lap for an hour. There was a won't-do kind of manner, which nettled Mrs. Stanton on behalf of her guest. She got her mail quickly, and decided not to ask any of them to her house that night, as she had intended. Going down the steps, Margaret and Ruth met Brooks.

"I have been searching for you, Mrs. Stanton, to beg your permission to take Miss Aften rowing. May I?"

"If you choose to take the risk."

He looked at the calm bay and the flushed cheeks of Miss Aften. "Will you come?" he asked of her.

"Thanks."

The two turned back, passing the hotel piazza, as Ruth thought, unnecessarily and slowly. If Ned had meant that all should see her with him, his design succeeded, for several rose, looked over the railing, and sat down again.

"Mrs. Stanton," called a lady, whose hair, like her drapery, was always neat and tight, "come up here and tell us all about it. Who is she?

Margaret, nothing loath, came back and was surrounded. "How just like Brooks to compromise him-

self by going rowing with a free-lover!" said the Bostonian.

"Mr. Brooks has gone with my friend, Miss Aften," replied Mrs. Stanton, frigidly.

"Yes; but Philip Chatham says he heard of her out West, and that she is a socialist and a suffragist, and, worse than both, a free-lover."

"Is Mr. Chatham infallible?"

"We told him he was mistaken, but he shrugged his shoulders as if he could say more and wouldn't."

"Was that all?"

"Yes; but he was perfectly right to speak, so we could guard our daughters."

"Oh!" And Mrs. Stanton thought of the futile attempts these various daughters had made to enlist the admiration of Ned Brooks. "I will put up a red flag while she is with me, as her influence may be epidemic, if not contagious."

"Will she be with you long?"

"All summer."

There was a groan, for Mrs. Stanton's tea-parties were a weekly solace in a place where there were neither shops nor private theatricals. As Margaret went off, the stalwart Bostonian was afraid, after all, she had made a mistake. Mrs. Stanton was not a woman likely to be deceived in another; the etiquette which she insisted upon among her guests was well known. She never would have brought forward a doubtful person. Margaret's double nature rejoiced that she had neither "given away" her guest nor committed herself, as she wondered how she could define her phrase all summer, when it was the last of August.

"Have you been annoyed?" asked Brooks of Miss Aften, when they were out of hearing of the piazza hostilities.

"I fear Mrs. Stanton has been more annoyed on my behalf than I have been—shall be in a moment. It was very good in you to cool my temper by this row."

"Let me ask one question: has Chatham any right to annoy you?"

"Not the slightest. I knew of him through others. In my efforts to help them I met him. I partly thwarted his purposes, though it may be unjust to call indifference purpose. That is all."

"I think I understand. He is a sinuous man."

Their row was short, from conventional reasons. Conventionality, in spite of all that is said against it, is a shelter from embarrassments and a bulwark of self-respect.

In the afternoon Brooks sought Chatham, and found him idling with the billiard-balls.

"Will you play, or do you row in the afternoon?" asked Chatham.

"You had a mighty pretty girl with you this morning," said a man who was just leaving the room, "though Chatham says she is a socialist or a free-lover, which might be deucedly inconvenient;" and he gave a censorious laugh as he went out.

"Chatham," said Ned, putting his hands in his pockets and facing him, "what's this nonsense you've been insinuating about Miss Aften?"

"I did not know it was any of your business what I say or don't say."

"It is my business to see that no guest of Mrs. Stanton's is made uncomfortable by your remarks."

"I did not know you had known her long enough to be aware of her past."

"Her past! What right have you to insinuate anything about her past?"

Chatham tried to seem scornful, but the angry look in Brooks's eyes warned him to be careful. Besides, he did not know how much Brooks knew, and if Miss Aften had told Ned about a past, in which he had been culpably dishonorable, even as the world judges, he had better conciliate Brooks rather than increase his anger.

"I have heard before that you interfere with what is none of your business," continued Brooks.

"If you are more specific in your demands, it may be convenient for me to accommodate you."

"Then I insist on your undoing the mischief you have already done."

If Chatham had imagined how little Brooks knew, that it was simply the man's trust in Ruth's sweet integrity which made him now so aggressive for her sake, he might have answered differently. As it was, he replied, scornfully,—

"And if I should find that impossible?"

"Then Mrs. Stanton and I shall take occasion to forget that we know you."

Even while Brooks was speaking, he could not but admire the skill with which Chatham toyed with the balls and the unusual skill with which he made a massé-shot. He suspected that his words had hit certain pockets of memory in Chatham's life, and that he

would leave the place rather than have any allusion to their contents before himself or others.

As Ned looked across the bay and saw the creeping mist coming down the Saint Croix River and hiding the round, soft headlands on the right, he came nearer to drawing a moral analogy between the effect of fog and the effect of slander than he would have believed himself, a moral Bohemian, capable of doing.

CHAPTER XII.

EXPLANATIONS.

MRS. STANTON was extremely uncomfortable. She deemed it unadvisable to tell her husband the hotel rumor, for though, man-like, he cared little for gossip in general, she fancied this special fabrication would annoy him; and for egoistic reasons she did not wish to be sure that it would have that effect. Since their engagement days she had never seen him so interested in any other woman, herself excepted, as he now seemed to be in Miss Aften. He listened to his wife, but he talked with their guest. Nor did Margaret feel quite at home with herself. Complexity and simplicity were two words which ran in her mind with their varied social applications.

One of her rules for social intercourse was never to ask direct questions, lest it put her in awkward predicaments, either of knowledge or feigned friendship. At the same time, she seemed to possess, by divination,

a careful measurement of a person's social position. This contrast between her lack of questioning and her knowledge of personal data arose partly from her habit of close observation, and partly from her real preference for people's thoughts rather than for their mere existence as human animals. She always paid close attention to what was said about books and subjects, though she was often convinced that the final conclusion of knowledge must be that the thinker knew that others knew that he himself knew that he knew nothing.

In her intercourse with Miss Aften she had purposely refrained from using any of the entering wedges of conversation so abundant among kind-hearted persons, such as, Where did you come from? or, Are you one of a large family? It now, however, had become necessary to extract from Miss Aften positive information concerning her antecedents, though Mrs. Stanton had almost concluded that it was the girl's simplicity, and not her duplicity, which had kept her silent about herself.

She had meant that afternoon to take Ruth up the Denny River, for the fog, which had been so suggestive, morally, to Brooks, had cleared off. The myriad eddies and currents of the river; the whirlpools in which many a fisherman's boat had, circling, sought the river's depth on dark winter nights; the surf tides, running from one green point to another, or joining in a frolicking independence of their own across the water's width, made the excursion a favorite one with all lovers of the picturesque and of imaginary danger.

If Mrs. Stanton could have been sure that only the gracious Philadelphians and Baltimoreans would have

gone, she would have still ventured to take Miss Aften on the party. But the Boston lady of portly frame and stalwart conscience and the New Yorker, omniscient in the knowledge of who's who, acquired by extensive travel among hotels, were also going, and Mrs. Stanton lacked the courage to run the gauntlet of their disinterested curiosity. Moreover, if she could take the girl away by herself, there might be opportunity for the needed inquiries; therefore she proposed to Miss Aften that they should be exclusive, and go in the village-cart to Meadow Brook.

"It is so sunny and cosey there, just room enough for two in the cart and for one cart on the wet, mossy road. If there are any other people at the Cove, we'll follow up the tiny brook till we come to the prehistoric wall which is there."

Ruth could but assent; for, with that singular intuition of hers which so often made her discern another's waverings, she felt that her hostess was annoyed about her, and in some way wished to separate her from the guests at the hotel. As they rode along, Ruth said,—

"Tell me, have I done something you do not like?"

Mrs. Stanton's carefully-planned campaign of questions and side remarks was frustrated by this directness, but like a skilful general she quickly availed herself of the opening into the land of suspicion.

"Well, no, not exactly; only it is a little odd that you have been with us so many days and we don't know—you haven't told us about yourself."

"Why, I am having such a beautiful time that I forgot all about myself till——"

"Till when?"

"Last night, when I chanced to see a stranger in the hall; but that does not concern me."

"It does indeed, for he says you are——" and Mrs. Stanton stopped. She had gone further than she meant.

"What?"

"Oh, never mind; I don't believe it."

"Excuse me, Mrs. Stanton; I fear you do believe it. Would it not be franker to tell me and let me deny or accept it?"

"He says——" But as Margaret glanced at the pure, noble face of her companion, whose expression was of sympathy for Mrs. Stanton rather than of dread for herself, she was ashamed of her own queryings.

"Tell me," said Miss Aften, pityingly.

"He says that you believe in the abolition of marriage, and that good faith and free love will help the world more than the church institution of marriage."

Ruth was silent for awhile and Margaret began to pity her. They had reached Meadow Brook Cove, and Mrs. Stanton was preparing to turn homeward, when the girl exclained,—

"Please let us stop; you need not be afraid of me. I can tell you so much better when even the third party of your horse does not distract me by flourishing his tail or by any kind of motion."

Curiosity, disappointment, and hauteur struggled in Mrs. Stanton, as she fastened the animal and led the way to a big rock, where, sheltered from the afternoon sun, they could watch the cliffs and the waters running over each other. Ruth rested her face in the palms of her hands and her elbows on her knees. Mrs. Stanton, who sat purposely just above her, in order to catch

every change in her expression, saw the sadness in it pass into quiet resolve.

"It is over now," began Ruth. "It stung me, your —his words. I had come here to Farmer Drew's to live for a few weeks in the peace of sunshine and in the teaching mysteries of the fog before I took up my life-work, for which I have been fitting myself ever since I was a little girl. I had forgotton part of a painful experience, and what you have said has suddenly shown me how misconstruction, to call it by a mild name, may injure my usefulness. He could scarcely do me a greater harm than to say that I believe in such things."

"Then you are not a free-lover."

"If you mean, do I believe in marriage without love, I do not; neither do I believe in love without marriage. We need the State sanction as well as the Church sanctity for the marriage rite. Though I would not prevent the possibility of divorce, I would so heighten the solemnity and joy, the eternity and the humanity of marriage, that the probability of divorce should become an unrecognized factor in thinking of it."

"Then, why should Mr. Chatham have insinuated that you did?"

"Because he once did a great wrong to some one whom I befriended. He was angry with what he called my interference. I know him in no other way than through that experience, but I cannot tell you of it, for it concerns others. I have not seen him nor heard of him for a long time."

"He would destroy you with the weapon which will destroy him, for slander recoils on itself. Can you forgive my having asked?"

"I regret that you should have felt it necessary."

"You forget," said Mrs. Stanton, hesitatingly, "that I knew little about you."

"Nor I of you," replied Ruth, "except through your great kindness, which was its own best certificate of nobility."

"I had not thought of that." It had never occurred to Mrs. Stanton that she could be unknown.

"Forgive me," said Ruth, laying her hand in the lady's lap. "I see now I was wrong; your hospitality was so generous that I forgot the need of credentials. It was not because I had anything to conceal. I am so little to myself, the universe is so big, that in the present acceptance of whatever is, I do not think of the past, which must always stand in relation to the present. How wonderfully kind in you all to trust me as you did! Why did you not ask me who I was?—not that I could give any other pedigree than an honest one of work."

Mrs. Stanton stroked the girl's sunny hair, and wondered how she could ever have mistrusted. "Tell me of your life-work, to which you just alluded, only begin at the beginning."

"Gladly. You shall know all the little there is to know in outline, and then I will fill up with details as much as you wish. There was no psychology of childhood when I was born, as there is now. My parents kept no record of my growth. You did not know that I belong to this island, though I have never seen it until this summer. I have only been to the other end of the island, and there but once. But a woman sent for some one to help her with her sick child, and I

went, as payment of a debt to my great-grandparents for letting me trace myself back to their sturdy independence. When I was nursing the child I heard much of you, and then I knew who it was who had taken me in. My great-grandparents were Baptists, down by Mallock's Beach: their children refused to receive adult baptism, as was customary, so they migrated west and settled in Chicago, where I was born. The income from the land my father bought at that time has since then made me at ease in money matters. I remember helping mamma in house-work. When night came and the dishes were washed, she sat by my father's side on a carpet-covered lounge, he in his shirt-sleeves and she with her hands folded over her apron; it was a very demure picture they made.

"When mother died, she gave father into my childish keeping. He was my protector, my playmate, my guide and confidant. He had life-knowledge rather than book-knowledge, and taught me by proverbs. 'He who wants a horse without a fault,' and 'All comes round to him who can wait,' were his texts for contentment and patience. Our Sundays were spent in long country rambles. From him I learnt that every form of life has its span of enjoyment, and that gratitude is creation's tribute to immortality. If an insect lighted on his newspaper, he brushed it aside, that it might have its full chance to live, and mosquitoes never troubled him. One night he laid his dear old head on my shoulder and went to sleep. The doctor said it was heart-failure: I knew it was missing mother."

"After his death I went to college, that I might learn more fully how to carry out, in later years, my

service of usefulness, whatever it might be. There I saw how many studied for the sake of future self-support; others from ambition; a few because there was nothing else to do; fewer still from the love of learning in itself. None seemed to take knowledge, whether of science, literature, or history, as fuller illustrations of the great debt of happiness which each owes to the other and all in turn to God; at least, the debt was recognized in theory, but not in daily payment of grateful lives. Every study was full of joy: the revelations and intimacies in science; the growth of moral purpose and the steady march of progress in history; the glowing sense of derivation, the delight in translation of finding the apt English word which related me, my little self, way back to primal ages; all these were so many gifts poured into my hands and brain, which I must pour out again before sorrowing men and women, to show them how natural, beautiful, and right it is to be joyous.

"Then my aunt, the only relation left to me, needed me, and I lived with her until her death. She was a Methodist in good and regular standing; through her seasons with backsliders I saw the necessity for the force of personality in all one does. Her rough, plain pleading often, to use her own language, brought the sinner home. Next I went to Cornell University for a post-graduate course in Moral Philosophy. There I met a friend, who took me back with her to the 'Woman's Corner' in Dakota, and I spoke as best I could in school-houses and home circles. A year ago I came to Cambridge to find that evasive quality, Eastern culture. A month ago I went to farmer Drew's, for

complete rest and isolation, until I found you, before I soon begin my permanent work."

"And that is——?" said Mrs. Stanton, in low tones.

"Why, did you not understand me?—the ministry; only I do not like to call my helping by that name."

"Are you going to be a minister?"

"Yes, if I may be."

"But you have not been to a theological school?"

"No; and sometimes I fear that I may have made a mistake in not going. I do not yet know, but I fancied, I do still fancy, that what a woman needs in preaching is not the acquirement of exegesis, but the richness that comes from wider study outside of ecclesiastical history and systematic theology. Too cautious a course in homiletics leads divinity-school graduates to preach routine sermons. It is only when they are in middle life that they break through the thraldom of texts and Biblical subjects. Their practical discourses often suggest a painful search for motes.

"I imagine that the divinity school of the next generation will simply be the widest university training that one can receive, with a Toynbee Hall for its lecture-room. If theological schools put their stamp of formal thought and sameness of delivery on men, still more will women be sealed with their mark; because we are more impressionable must we be widely and carefully trained, especially in the study of applied ethics and history. Indeed, this is done now at Harvard and elsewhere. I may be wrong in caring less about other studies, and may soon feel the want of such knowledge. See, the tide has gone out, the jagged outlines of the low-lying rocks are bare; so it may be

with me when the tides of emotion are low through nature's weariness; then I may wish I had had that formal training which enables men to hide their ebbing ardor by writing sermons on set texts, with little warmth or logic in them."

"Do you not feel lonely?"

"No; yet it was very, very sweet to meet you."

It was now Mrs. Stanton whose head was bowed. This life of Ruth Aften was something unimagined by her; its vocabulary was unknown, its intensity, its singleness of aim were as phantom mists, whose reality she could not seize. Life evidently was not a matter of duty, but of happiness, to Miss Aften.

Slowly crept over Mrs. Stanton a sense of relief. If Ruth were that unknown product of conscience and the times, a female minister, a woman clergyman, a lady rectoress (no, heaven forbid that the church should ever bring forth such an anomaly), then, why, then there could be no harm in begging Miss Aften to stay with them. It was all right. There could be no danger for Mr. Stanton; what Margaret's fear had been was not defined. Brook's misanthropic chivalry would never choose such a person for whom his lance should be broken. She herself, then, might creep into slow companionship with a woman whose presence from the first moment she saw her had ennobled and soothed her.

"You will stay with us all summer?" As Mrs. Stanton now used the phrase, she meant till October; "And you will let me tell the family?"

"I cannot stay, and please do not tell them. I have a curious feeling, as if these last weeks were my prep-

aration in the wilderness, and I do not want the quiet broken by wondering comment."

"At least, let me tell my husband."

"Oh, yes. I suppose it proves how wholly I am a woman, that I shrink from observation of those who will not take my purpose simply as a matter of course. I must go back to my boarding-house."

"Stay with me the rest of the week," pleaded Margaret. And so it was agreed.

CHAPTER XIII.

PEOPLE AND HERRING.

"WHAT do you think now?" said Mrs. Stanton that night to her husband.

"That the moon is not made of green cheese because it was made before cows, or that somebody has said something which no one should have thought."

"Nonsense! this is serious; it is about Miss Aften."

"You can never persuade me that she is a free-lover."

"She isn't. She is a minister."

"A what?"

"A minister."

"I should as soon have thought of her being a devil."

Mrs. Stanton was relieved. She saw that the charm was rudely broken, and that she could now enjoy Ruth's friendship to the utmost. Ruth herself felt the change;

while rejoicing in the cordiality of the wife, she regretted the sudden formality of her host. Frank saw it, and thought, "Father is getting tired of her, but mother is growing rested through her." Ned Brooks noticed the alteration in Mr. Stanton, and watched to be on the defensive for Miss Aften, hoping to engage more of her attention as the elder man sought her less.

The following day was Mrs. Stanton's evening at home, and many friends strayed over from the hotel. The stalwart Bostonian, in the full rigging of her morality, bore down upon Ruth, who tried to escape her.

"Do not avoid me, Miss Aften. I am glad to meet you. I had a false impression concerning you, which, I am happy to say, circumstances have corrected. I say this in justice to myself."

"Let me take you into the other room for some Russian tea," interposed Brooks, in his most courtly manner; and the Bostonian, happy in receiving attentions from a man younger than herself, accepted with alacrity.

Ruth then became the prey of a New York lady, of cosmopolitan art in putting questions. "So you do not know Mr. Chatham, after all?" she remarked; and, without waiting for a reply, continued, "He says he mistook you for some one else of the same name. He begged me to present to you his compliments, for he was suddenly called back to Boston this morning."

Miss Aften bowed indifferently and turned to her next neighbor, leaving the New Yorker slightly annoyed at her want of humble gratitude.

"I must learn to trust to my intuitions, and not be influenced by gossip," said the Boston woman, with apparent youthful frankness, as Brooks led her off; "but, you know, we Bostonians are always ready to acknowledge when we are in the wrong, and so I told her at once, for she must have noticed my manner yesterday. Now my conscience is easy; it is so much better to do right, don't you think so?"

"It is so much better not to make a mistake, madam."

"Ah, you wicked Bohemian! There! I like this temperance drink. Is Mrs. Stanton really a W. C. T. U. woman after all? Take me back to Miss Aften. She fascinates me, she is so unique; like a half-opened oyster: doesn't want to leave her shell. Pretty simile, wasn't it? None but a New Jersey man like Mr. Chatham would have thought of it. It is so beautifully true."

If Brooks could have put a narcotic into the tea, he would have gladly done it.

"What is a W. C. T. U. woman?" he asked, instead.

"Why, don't you know? It is the largest organization of women in the world."

"Are you its President?"

"I! Why it is not composed of society people. Of course I am temperance in my own way; I don't approve of real liquor; but I could not go on a crusade, nor to a convention, especially if it were held in Tremont Temple. Why, the other day, some one, with whom I have merely a bowing acquaintance, was congratulated because at last her name as speaker was in red and blue letters on those dreadful white placards,

each side of the Meionaon. I often think what horrid ideas are held about us real Bostonians by the people at the Tremont House, the country people, you know, the middle class, that safety-valve and balance-power of our nation, when they read all those dreadful advertisements of lectures to women only and to men only. I forgot I was talking to you, Mr. Brooks. You listen so admirably. I don't see how they call you a Bohemian. Were you born in Bohemia?"

"Do you know, madam," inquired Brooks, gravely, ignoring her question, "why Bostonians prefer to be Unitarians?—because then they never need to be born again."

While the lady was wondering whether she had been snubbed, or had heard an historical fact or a conundrum which one of high-church antecedents should reject, he had accomplished his object of elbowing her into a corner of the room, where elderly, intelligent females were being polite and non-committal to each other, the Sahara of conversation, with the sirocco wind of conventionality.

"Your name is of Canadian origin," meanwhile had a courteous Philadelphian remarked to Miss Aften.

"I have an impression that it is French, but genealogy is not my strong point."

"Pardon, it was Mr. Chatham who said that when he first heard your name he thought he knew you, but that as soon as he saw you he was convinced that he had never had that pleasure."

"Have you been here long enough to explore the island, Mr. Avery?" asked Brooks, who came up to Ruth just in time to relieve her of any attempt at an-

swer, and who was rewarded for the skill with which he had twice shielded her by her involuntarily moving towards him.

"Sometimes," he replied, "I am interested in the people, but they repel investigation. The past life must have been an Americanized feudalism, with its intermingling of French, Indian, and English ways. Can you tell me of it?"

"The Admiral's days are so far away," answered Ruth, "that the romance of that time is now centred in St. Anne's Church, with its chancel carpet, its altar vestments, and its stoles, all worked by the Owen ladies in cross-stitch, with intersecting designs of crosses."

"Was there tribute paid to the Admiral?"

"Yes, in rent and weir shares, in poultry and lamb and fatted pork, frozen in big barrels."

"Precisely and genealogically, how came the island into possession of the Owens?"

"It was granted to Admiral William Owen and his cousins, through the intercession of Sir William Campbell. In grateful compliment to him, the Admiral changed the name of the island from Passamaquoddy Outer Island to Campobello. The Admiral, under Lord Clive, had rendered some service at the blockade of Pondicherry. After the death of William Owen and his cousins, the island came into the hands, by purchase, of William Fitz-William Owen, who ruled here as bishop and lord, as ruler and magistrate, until his death in 1857. You have seen the old mansion down by the Owen?"

"Oh, yes; I sat in the Admiral's arm-chair, wrote

a postal at his table, put on his three-cornered hat, and got into his coach in the barn. The past is much more interesting than the present, Miss Aften."

"Not if you are obliged to eat pork-pie and herring-roll, Mr. Avery."

"Does the herring-roll bear the same relation to sardines that chicory coffee does to Mocha?"

"Not so intimate; herring-roll is pot-luck, herring chopped with spices. Before there was competition in it and resort to other ingredients, it was as good as caviar."

"That reminds me, Miss Aften,—will you go with me to see the men drive herring to-morrow night?"

"I think Mrs. Stanton has made arrangements for Miss Aften to go with her," quickly interrupted Brooks.

"I shall have the pleasure of meeting you, then, round the beach bonfires."

And Mr. Avery bowed and left her with the old-time, faultless courtesy of his own ancestry.

"Did you know, Miss Aften, that Mr. Chatham went to Boston this morning?"

"Thanks!" And she held out her hand.

"Will you come out on the piazza, Miss Aften? It is *en règle* on moonlight nights, when every one looks through the telescope with the affectation of wondering innocence; but it will not be proper for me to offer you my arm."

"On the same principle that one can go sleighing, but not buggy-driving, with a gentleman," she retorted.

As they walked up and down, he wished he could

have retained her hand and drawn it through his arm, but the remembrance of his words mocked him.

"Why should you thank me?" he questioned.

"Because I know that he would never have gone, nor have taken refuge in mistaking me for some one else, unless you had shown him it was for his own interest to go."

"Do you believe in anagrams?"

"I am absolutely afraid of their truth, they are the special providences of interpretations. But why do you ask?"

"Because Chatham speaks of himself as belonging to the first families of Christianity, and the anagram of Christianity is,—'I cry that I sin.'"

"If he should ever be sentenced to a penitentiary, he might also cry, 'Nay, I repent it,' the anagram of that word."

"Do you know the one on sweetheart?" said Ned, indicating a self-absorbed couple, perched on the piazza railing in a corner far away from the moonlight; "it is, 'There we sat.'"

"The unconsciousness of lovers must come by grace, for certainly no training could make it effective."

"It is rather the selfishness of human nature, which expands as it possesses. Each wants the other exclusively."

"That appropriation in courtship is to-day's remnant of marriage by capture. See, there it is petrified in the old Friar;" and she pointed to the huge boulder with the human-looking head in front of the cliff. "It was once an Indian bridegroom, who wished to take his bride to Lubec, contrary to the wishes of his mother-

in-law; therefore he was turned to stone. His own mother and brother suffered the same fate; they are the same small rocks on the left; and the bride was drowned."

"How did you know so much about the island? I thought you were a stranger here."

"I am to the Campobello of these times; but, as I told Mrs. Stanton yesterday, my great-grandparents were born here, and I know the place well by its traditionary lore. The people my far-off relatives knew, even the Bay-Shells-Ore cats, with their seven claws, and double-footed at that, have passed away. Do not let me be discourteous to Mrs. Stanton by looking at the moon too long."

"You have not looked at it once through the telescope."

"No, but its cold beauty has been shining on us; and now we must go in."

He went because she had used the pronoun we. Mrs. Stanton claimed her, and he did not see her again that evening. When all had gone, he wandered out into the same moonlight, only colder and more unsympathetic, and sighed for the days of marriage by capture, for of marriage through a woman's free will he doubted.

The next night, before the moon had risen, they drove over to Herring Cove. The bay was fuller of herring than it had been for years. More than fifty boats skirted the beach with their silent rowers, while weirdly in the distance loomed up the masts of little sailing-vessels. The beach was crowded with carriages, people, and children, and busy with the sound of many

voices and the quiet lapping of the waves. As the row-boats struck out from the shore they looked to Ruth like moving lanterns. The smaller boats carried bales of cotton-wool fastened to a stick and saturated with kerosene. Others had an iron pot or cradle, into which the wool was thrown, or a roll of bark at the end of a pole. The burning wool was always at the end of the boat from which the scoop or net was thrown. The light attracted the fish, which came in dark schools near it, only to be driven into the net, which, as soon as it was full, was emptied into the bottom of the boat, until it held from two to four hogsheads.

It was almost torture to see the deep net coming up, full of wiggling, shining fish, like spirits struggling for freedom. Yet if it fell over and the herring went back into the sea, Ruth found herself mentally taking sides with the disappointed driver. Afar off she saw the boats already full trading their contents to the sailing-vessels, and she fancied she could hear the murmur of angry dispute between the islanders and the mainlanders.

Here and there a drop of burning kerosene, falling on the water, sailed along like a lone star. The fitful procession of lighted boats, with their men in red shirts, glimmered and gloomed under the rising moon. On the beach, children slid down the back of a whale which had been cast ashore and fell foremost over its head, threatening to be lost, as was Jonah.

"Why am I thinking of Pluto, of Charon and the River Styx, of the darkness of Castle Chillon and the self-inflicted agonies of Calvinism? I do not like it," said Ruth to Mr. Stanton.

"Nor do I. It is the wholesale torture of fishing instead of the delicate finesse of trouting. The principle of barter there in the background shows the absurdity of some tariffs. Border-lands are bad exponents of protection."

"The beans must be ready," called Mrs. Stanton; "it is time we joined the picnickers."

Each group had its bonfire. In among the wood were the bean-pots, covered with sea-weed. The beans, already half-baked in the kitchen-stove, received in this way a delicious saline taste, and served as refreshment for the wet boatmen as they came on shore. The sense of capture in the weird picturesqueness of the scene haunted the imaginations of Mrs. Stanton's party, and they drove home silently, instead of exchanging jokes with the waiting women-folks.

CHAPTER XIV.

FAILURE.

"WILL you go to St. Andrew's?" inquired Mr. Stanton, one morning, of his guest. "There is an excursion going, and you can buy Wedgewood for Christmas presents."

"I always liked that story of the old man, who would never let any imperfect ware leave his manufactory, saying, if a workman had poorly finished a piece, 'This won't do for old Josiah,'" replied Miss Aften.

"I fear he would be as little satisfied with some of

the later workmanship as with the explanations of the medallions. A Vassar girl tried to explain some of them to Stickney, the dealer, but she was too voluble for him. Most persons have an idea that the Cupid and Psyche myths, which are so exquisitely cut upon them, belong to the frieze of the Parthenon, that Flaxman's outlines are geographical, and that Pegasus is a man."

"People's mistakes are extraordinary," remarked Brooks. "A man told me yesterday that he 'had laid out his grounds with a turpentine walk and a revenue of populous trees for his friends to lemonade in.'"

"I beg you not to distract Miss Aften's attention," entreated Mr. Stanton. "Will you go to St. Andrew's?"

"You have told me that it is the fashion here to ask who is going, before deciding, as the scenery does not enter into the merits of the question."

"That depends upon what you do."

"Your answer might imply that you would act contrary to whatever I do. I shall take it, however, as meaning partnership. So, as this is my last day with you, I would rather pass it here with you all, quietly, than in the friendly buzz of a water picnic."

"You cannot think of going, Ruth!" interposed Mrs. Stanton.

"I must. My few days have stretched into nearly a fortnight; but it has been so delightful to be in what a Boston friend calls a pagan home with New England antecedents, that I have lingered."

"Then you must give us each, separately, part of your day," said Mr. Stanton. "Will you go with me to Head Harbor this afternoon?"

"Oh, that is not a fair division, for it is a long drive; you will have to give me all the morning," objected Mrs. Stanton.

"What is left to me?" asked Ned.

"You have had so much, you can go without," answered Margaret.

"Yes; but there is a great deal left to talk about, as Miss Aften has not always kept awake when we have been rowing."

"That was because I felt so much at home with you. I cannot go to sleep when all the hotel people are here."

"Are you not going to put in your claim, Frank?" inquired his mother.

"I am going to Boston."

"Not on Miss Aften's last day!"

"I have said so all the time. I can't endure this superficial life any longer; it is all wicked to me. Did you read in last night's paper of the girl to whom the judge gave twenty-six days in the House of Correction? When she heard the sentence, she said, 'I'm glad it is so long,' and dropped dead on the floor. The paper says they had to clear the court-room of her. Clear it of a life, which the Court and its laws have made wretched! I tell you, mother, it is a shame. We ought not to stay here another minute."

"Has Wolfgang returned?" asked Frank's father, dryly.

"No; but his wild words are truth compared with hypocritical politenesses I have heard this summer."

"I am afraid your son thinks I have added to the lotus pleasures of your home. He does not remember

that the lotus-seed, encased in mud, and thrown back into the waters, becomes again food for the hungry."

"I do not see the point of your reproof, Miss Aften," replied Frank.

"Not a reproof; only as my father used to explain a remark I but half understood, by another, so let me quote to you a proverb: 'With time and patience, the mulberry-leaf becomes satin.'"

"I have not patience when there is so little time."

"I believe there is no philanthropy which so injures the working-classes as kind, unreasoning impatience with present facts; it breeds discontent among those of lesser reason and feebler will."

"I cannot argue with a lady at my father's table."

"But when you have saved her life at the risk of your own, you want her at least to be worthy of your deed. Will you not try and help her to see your side of the question?"

The young man blushed. Good-by, Miss Aften. If I never see you again, I shall always remember your beautiful face."

"And the want of sympathy and energy in me?"

"Yes; I do not understand it, with your face."

"Forgive an older woman's freedom;" and she laid her hand on his shoulder. "Remember the lotus fable. This has been my harvesting-time in the beauty of sunset, sea, and wood; out of it my lotus-leaf may turn to bread for those who need me."

He bowed, but whether offended or not, she could not tell.

"Come into the garden, and leave the immediate family, as they say of the chief mourners, to say good-

by to Sir Galahad," said Brooks. "If Frank would only break his lance in defence of order; but the inequalities of life have made him bitter. He has feeling enough for a whole population, instead of for himself alone, and his sympathies incite others to dynamite disorder."

Ruth was very glad to escape. Taking the flower-scissors and basket, she followed Ned into the garden-patch, in its unconventional outlines and brilliant hues, so curiously in keeping with the notches and colors of the island's circuit. Brooks, unobserved, had often seen her picking the flowers, and had liked to watch her, sure that, in her unthinking postures, she passed into different mental attitudes before each variety.

Now she stood upright and tossed the tall bachelor buttons into her basket, though she gathered the pink ones into a corner by themselves. She reached way down among the nasturtiums, to bring them up by their long stems, as if searching out the reason for their superabundant existence. She cut the mignonette in sadness. She bent down lovingly over the pansies, plucking them one by one, with a countenance that told him the revelations they nodded to her. She smiled in the faces of the gay yellow and purple ones; picked slowly the black ones, and laid them among the deep, crimson tints of their companions, as one folds away the mourning crape before the coming joys of life, so reluctant are we to part with the symbols of pain. She took reverently the pure, white flower, with its lines of black, clear and slight as eyelashes; and her face grew very quiet as she knelt before the violet and sunset-colored pansies.

Brooks saw tears in her eyes as she rose, and felt

again he was trusted. Her unspoken confidence in him had so ennobled him that it was with more than weariness that he thought of his past life.

"Help me to bear in my burden," said she, appealingly, looking at the over-full basket.

"Let me always help you bear it."

"Ah, but it is always that of some one's else. I have none of my own. Mr. Stanton must have gone down to the pier, for I hear the boat-whistle."

Mrs. Stanton was following her son through the telescope, and as the little steamer left the pier she joined Ruth and led her off among the tall beeches and balsam-firs, to a hidden, grassy slope.

"There!" exclaimed she; "I can bear it no longer. That is my boy, for whom I have laid down my life; for whom I have crucified in me all my longings to do something else, that I might become what I fancied was his ideal of a woman,—a graceful, supple, charming being. All my natural fervor, heat, and angularity I have put out of his sight. I have risen early, that he might not see me work. Through the looking-glass I have studied how to keep myself young. I have read his books and known his friends. Yet he has drifted, drifted away from me. He says he cannot bear the friction of home; he cannot always restrain himself. He tells me I am disappointed in him, and that if he had been more sternly treated, he would have had more steady energy. It is a bitter experience for a mother to find that she cannot make her son happy."

"Dear Margaret, it is bitterer to have one's own son do wrong; that your Frank has never done."

"Never! How could he?"

"Never, just because you are his mother."

"Yes; but now I am a trouble to him. This very place sets him the wrong way; its quiet aggravates him, people disturb him. I had hoped that this would be the home which would have brought us two into one mould of life. My boy! my boy! for whom I would have died or lived, as he wished. No, do not touch me," she exclaimed, as she pushed away Ruth's hand.

"I have longed for his touch, for his kiss. I have put my hand gently, stealingly on his, as you just laid yours on mine. I have seen him set his lips and wait until I took it off. And, oh, Ruth, one day, not long ago, I could not help it, I thought my heart would break, to see him so unhappy, so longing to go and do something great, that I put my lips down on his neck, just below his ear, just above his collar, in what he used to call mamma's cubby-hole of kisses. He stood upright, and waited. It was not unkind in him; he could not help not wanting me."

"Dear, dear friend, you are all wrong. Begin life again; begin not with renunciation of yourself for your boy, but with development of yourself, in your own way. Do not be so anxious to please him. Do not let him know that what he does or does not do acts as clog or incentive to you, for he feels, he cannot help seeing, that you study his every tone and glance. Be free with him, as you are with Ned—I mean Mr. Brooks. Let the friction of difference come; it is healthier than the obeisance of silence or surrender of opinion, on which you nurture him. Let him go to Boston and find the suffering which he is longing to

lessen. He is too young yet to see that you need him, that he here has a duty, to bring you back or out into the joy and freedom of expression which is your due. I do not know which it is, back into what you were or out into what you may be. You are more and more to me like one who has misread your son and husband,"—Mrs. Stanton shuddered,—"and who has sacrificed the energy for active life and the ability for executive work, to graft yourself into a kind of womanhood to which you do not belong by nature."

"You are half right. I thought that marriage meant wider growth. With motherhood my time and strength went in many ways, and they were blessed ways. I did not notice how little I saw of my husband. When Frank was the only child left me,—I cannot speak of those days of death,—then I vowed that my home should be so attractive he never could leave it; that I would so watch him he could not die. I studied his little lessons with him, I played his plays. As he grew older I made his home a centre for bright people, that without going out into the world he yet should see it. I studied to be graceful, entertaining, that he might stay at home. We came here partly that he might grow up away from suffering. He had books, art, music; yet he has grown off from me. The very tastes I cultivated for his sake have driven him off; the very ease and repose I simulated has nettled him. I represent to him an unreality; he longs to battle with sin and poverty rather than with conventions and mental misery which, even if needless, is real."

"Don't you see that in not being your true self you have injured both him and yourself?"

"Yes, but my true self is full of eagerness; I want to be doing all the time. I am restless, lonely, and I want to work it off. Then my quickness wearied my husband; my constant weighings and findings of myself wanting annoyed him. He had told me once for all he loved me, but with each fresh disappointment in myself I needed to be retold. So I turned to my boy; now he has turned from me. I have tried to hide it all. I do not wear my heart upon my sleeve for any one to peck at. I know the world envies me, and it always shall. Never mind me, Ruth, I have only been dreaming."

"I wish you could cry like other women and cry it out."

"I have learned not to do that, generally not to feel. I shall not look so well to-night, just because I have suffered to-day."

"Would not your suffering appeal to your boy?"

"No, for I am clothed, fed, and housed. He would say that I ought not to live in these surroundings; that they should gall me as they do him."

"Does he want you to sell all that you have and give to the poor?"

"Not to them so much as to the State. He wants equality, mediocrity systematized. I hate it. Luxuries are now my necessities."

"Does he want you to live less well, less beautifully?"

"Yes. He wants the table waited upon, but he does not want any servant class. He would like to have me open our house to some Fresh-Air-Fund children, and I would rather board them at our farmer's."

"And you are right. The dream of equality is the curse of citizenship, but sympathy is the life-blood of humanity. It is indignation against the existing state of things in a family or society which embitters life."

"I am sorry for all poor persons, but I am much sorrier for myself."

"The actual hardships of life are not so consuming as jealousy of others' pleasures; from that you do not suffer, as do some less fortunate in wealth. Cannot you take life easily?"

"How curiously you form your sentences, as you did a moment ago! Excuse me, but they have so often lingered with me after we have been talking; they sound like statements."

"They are to me, for they are the steps by which I have taught myself patience. I repeat them unconsciously. I used to worry myself with the amount to be done and the small ability to do it; with the wretchedness of the poor and the misanthropy of those whose bodies are fed; but I have lived so much out of doors that my frenzied haste has passed away. I have learned to wait for the lichen's creep over the stony places of earth, rather than to rejoice in the rapid morning-glory bloom, which is evanescent."

"There it is again: you find the symbol for your thought."

"It is simply that nature has a symbol for every mood. Dear Mrs. Stanton, why do you not go among the wretched with your boy, and thus labor with him? Make his dreams of help realities, through your wider knowledge."

"For two reasons: first, because I believe he is all

wrong in wanting organization and State aid and State work. It is not sound political economy. Waiving that, the second one is the bitterer one; it is my Nemesis. I do not want to come in contact with suffering. I dislike it; it disturbs me. Selfishness of æstheticism cultivated by the seclusion of this place and founded on principles of financial benevolence! There is a sentence to match yours. Enough; I cannot now be different."

"There will be a worse Nemesis for you if you do not change. You cannot lead this artificial life of yours forever. There will come a day of hysteria, which will carry away all your defences of feigned self-restraint."

"Then stay with me. Since the first time I saw you, you have been more restful to me than any one I ever knew. You soothe my perturbations. Yet, because of you, I feel myself loosening from my old moorings, and speaking impetuously, as when I was a girl, forgetting grace, the last salvation of middle life."

"Think only of what you are saying, not of your way of saying it."

"Let me abase myself before you to the utmost. I have studied myself in the glass, as Lionardo da Vinci must have studied his masterpiece, that I might gain an impenetrability of grace, ease, and suggestiveness, which should haunt my boy and keep him by my side, as Mona Lisa, once seen, always remains in the memory."

"I am so sorry."

"Don't pity me, I will have none of it. Remember, girl, I have been dreaming. Come, let us go."

"No, not yet. I want——"

"Not now. What shall we have for tea,—mushrooms stewed, broiled, or raw?"

Ruth fell in with her mood, and on the way home the two friends discussed the pecuniary and nutritive value of mushrooms, as against the price and nourishment of beef, with all the zeal of economical housewives.

CHAPTER XV.

A SONG.

THE rain came and prevented the sixteen-mile drive to Head Harbor, though Ruth was not sorry to avoid it. It is the most beautiful road on the island, with its surprises of bright bay and solitudes of green wood; its long hills and its mile walk beyond the bars, through the pastures, to the fog-horn house; then down a chasm, up a straight, five-barred, iron ladder, across a foot-bridge over a rocky cleft to the light-house, with the distant horizon of New Brunswick and the Three Wolves.

If Miss Aften had been a more aggressive person, she would have felt she had a mission to perform in the Stanton family. "Don't try to regulate other people," and "Let married persons work out their own salvation," were two maxims which her father had often repeated to her, and which solaced her when she was saddened by what she could not help. Her carefully established convictions and her glowing sureness in their conclusions opened to her vistas in immortality

and gave her patience in waiting for others to see as she did. She knew that the first principles of her success in the ministry must depend upon her being at peace within herself.

She had been fearful that the trust in the rightness of things, into which she seemed to herself to have been born, might have been an illusion. Therefore she had as diligently studied to prove the certainty of God as others did to disprove his existence. Out of the truths of induction and deduction, which fit into each other with mathematical precision; out of the facts of science and the moral power of analogy; above all, out of the facts of self-consciousness, attested by universal history as well as by her own personality, she knew that God lived; therefore moral order, and happiness in that order, was sure to come for each human soul. To bring that order into the human universe, with its intricacies of heredity and perverted self-interest, was the task which each one should set himself to perform, so she thought, in so far as he could do it without insisting that his view of right was the only right.

Miss Aften's entire freedom from the illiberality of liberality enabled her to see truth in crannies of human belief and action which no one else saw, and made her sympathetic presence a joy to every one she met; not a mere negative content, but a positive, active gladness. There was none of the rhapsody of the mystic, the hallucination of the Christian Scientist, nor the impertinence of the mind-reader in her winsome activities. Yet with all her strength she believed in certain courses of conduct as most conducive to human happiness. She now feared that the coming years of Mrs. Stanton's

life would be marked with the melancholy of factitious interests. If Mr. Stanton had been less of a gentleman, she might have said to him something, she knew not what. Where a Quaker would have waited for the leadings of the spirit, she watched for insight into opportunity. She was alone in a corner of the piazza, sheltered from the rain, half thinking, half dreaming, in the consciousness of unconsciousness. She roused herself with a little start of surprise as Brooks found her there, after searching for her in the house.

"Did I disturb you, or do you wish to be alone?"

"Not at all," she replied, taking her feet off the lower round of a chair and pushing it towards him.

"Thank you. May I stay?"

"Yes; but I must go and pack."

"Shall you really leave us to-morrow?"

"Indeed I must."

"You have not asked me to come and see you."

"How can I, when I do not know where I shall be?"

"If you will tell me, I might come. Where is your home?"

"I have yet to make it; my old home has gone."

"Surely, Miss Aften, you need a protector, a——"

"No, I do not, and, what is more, you know I do not." And she laughed gayly, yet her words struck him as being emphatic.

He bowed rather gloomily, and she felt as she often did when talking with him,—a great desire to lay her hand in his and bid him be happy; but he was a man, if she were less or more than a woman; so she refrained.

"Mrs. Stanton says you are going back to Farmer Drew's?"

"Yes; my time is not up there."

"May I come and see you there?"

"How can I refuse you? I owe you too much gratitude; that is, if you really want to come."

"Don't you know that I do, Miss Aften?" and he tried to see her lowered eyes. "Don't you know it?" he persisted.

"I am afraid I am sorry that you do."

"Why?"

"Because my duties, my interests, will soon take me away from you all."

"Miss Aften, may I ask,—I have no right to, unless your graciousness accords it,—did you send Frank away?"

"What do you mean?" she answered, with such evident surprise and sincerity in her tone that he instantly regretted his rudeness; but jealously stung him, and he was ruder.

"You treated him very familiarly." Odious word; he did not mean to have used it.

"You are not your usual self, Mr. Brooks. Frank is a boy to me; his enthusiasms and his mistakes are alike full of interest. I fear he will do harm, in his desire for better conditions of life for the laborer, before he learns self-control. Besides, he saved my life, so of course I am grateful."

"Bother your life, your gratitude! I beg your pardon, that was not what I meant. I wish you would not talk of owing gratitude."

His confusion and vexation were so comical that her rising nervousness subsided, and she again laughed merrily.

"Then I may try?"

"Not to be rude again? yes. I really must go and pack." And she left him with a hauteur of which he had not supposed her capable. It delighted his senses as a man of the world, an existence which had been forgotten for the last two weeks, but disappointed his idealism. He wanted her always with that sweet cordiality which had awakened this trust in his better self. As the handle of the door turned, she turned her head back, saying, mischievously, perhaps apologetically,—

"You were accomplice in saving me: come and see me if you will."

He had the sudden good sense to merely thank her, but, in accordance with the law of reaction, she thought, "After all, I need not have said that he could come."

The evening was nearly over when Mr. Stanton came into the parlor. He had been interested in listening to a group of fishermen, who were discussing their respective rights to the whale on Herring Cove Beach. One wanted to tow it round to Welsh Pool and cut it up there; another wished to cut it on the beach and try out the fat on the spot. No one knew rightly who had first found it, or who had pulled the hardest in bringing it on shore. While they were talking, a boy appeared, saying that the whale was gone. There was no oil for any one, and each one went off, glad that, if he had lost, his companions had gained nothing.

Mr. Stanton was both annoyed and amused. He had missed the drive and now the evening with Miss Aften, and he well knew his wife's habit of early retirement for the beauty sleep. His feelings towards

their guest had undergone a change since he first heard of her profession. He had been indignant, when his wife told him of her choice, that a sensible woman like Miss Aften could so stultify herself as to be a minister. Next, he was annoyed with himself for caring what she did. Lastly, if she were to be such a hybrid product of the times, a female minister, he studied her. There was no indication of a lecturer or a zealot about her, and he tried to classify her in vain. Gradually he grew aware that he wished his wife were like her, though if she were he knew he could never have fallen in love with her. Miss Aften had too much repose to rouse any desire to conquer her; too much strength of character to please the vanity of any man who wished to be the stronger; yet the grace and charm, the sweetness and gayety of her manner were neither feigned nor insipid.

Not only had Mr. Stanton never felt himself so much of a man as when in conversation with her, but his wife had seemed to him less complex, more easily understood; he had even caught himself wondering if it would not be pleasant to take a little journey with her alone, the very possibility of which would have been a bore to him a while ago. It pleased him now to find the ladies by themselves. There was a welcome in their smile which was like cordial to his doubts and which would have puzzled a bystander.

"We have been talking of you," said his wife, frankly, for she fancied the unaccustomed tide of feeling in her for his affection had betrayed itself.

He was not quite ready in his self-sufficiency—the result of years when he had cared in vain for demon-

stration of affection—to know there was aught in him which should be discussed instead of accepted, and the unwonted briskness of his manner relaxed. Ruth noticed the change and tried to arrest it.

"May I come to you sometimes for help, Mr. Stanton?" she asked.

The unexpectedness of her appeal soothed him, and he sat down and chatted with them, forgetting, as he always ended in doing whenever with Ruth, that her future way of life was not only foreign to him, but one to be regretted.

"You promised, Miss Aften, to sing for us before you left."

"Hardly promised, did I? I said I wished I could."

"And you can."

"I confess, Mr. Stanton, that it is only regard for your good-will which has kept me silent. I sing but a few hymns."

He tried to think of the right answer to make, for her words had been like a quick blow.

"I knew it would be so," she continued, sadly. "My songs, hymns, are so much to me that I did not want to sing them unless you could care for them. My reverences cannot always be another's, I ought to remember."

"Surely, Miss Aften, as a gentleman I can give deference to any reverence of yours. Besides, I once had a simple boyhood, and my mother taught me words that come at times like Æolian harp sighings to my memory. I wish you could sing me her hymns."

"Tell me one of them."

"It was long ago, I was a little chap. I recall but two lines of her favorite stanza,—

'And the heart of the Eternal
Is most wonderfully kind.'"

Mrs. Stanton had bent forward, listening, for the beatings of her heart deafened the sound of his voice, but she did not speak.

"'And our lives would be all sunshine
In the sweetness of our Lord,'"

replied Ruth, repeating the last lines of Faber's hymn.

"That is it," said Mr. Stanton, pleased.

Ruth rose and went to the piano; her fingers ran over the keys. Softly, slowly, then full and rich, her voice poured itself forth in a gush of melody, through the dimly-lighted room, out on to the piazza, over on to the road, where rollicking men stopped their loud talking and listened. There was neither sudden break nor gymnastic effort in the voice; the song died away as naturally as it had risen. No one asked her to sing again that melodramatic tribute to art. As Mr. Stanton gave her the lighted candle for the night, he said,—

"I have been a boy again at my mother's knee."

When the door was closed, he turned and kissed his wife with a tenderness which she was too surprised to return.

CHAPTER XVI.

A WANDERER.

WOLFGANG went to Pittsburg, but carried no new gospel with him. The social Assemblies heralded him as the new Messiah, who was to free them from the thraldom of work and the tyranny of wages. Yet he had no definite plan of release. He talked of constitutions and by-laws as the forces which would equalize labor. He prophesied the downfall of legislatures and police, and the uprising of the individual. He grew eloquent over the love of woman, freely given without the chattel service of marriage; over the fraud of law and the insolence of the church. For the moment his unreasoning enthusiasm roused the listeners, who soon learned its jargon and saw its incoherence. It was not for this that they had subscribed their pittances for his travelling expenses. Besides, his daughter had not come with him. She had been the prophetess of individual rule, and she, it was rumored, had sunk back under the authority of the contractor's day of ten hours.

The Assembly sent him off, footsore and burning with rage that he had been treated no better than a wandering preacher of a Salvation Army. He found his way from one town to another, sometimes talking in an inn, sometimes near the shops after working-hours were over, oftener in straggling hamlets; here men lay around the combination store of rum and

groceries. No voice reached him from home, if having wife and children constitutes a home. It is the cat-like quality of human nature which makes wanderers call a special place home, even when it is lacking in all its attributes.

At New Haven he was taken ill, picked up in the streets as a vagrant, and sent to the City Hospital, where he lay in the rest of unconsciousness. This was succeeded by delirium, in which he raved against church and state, against bosses and contractors, and called upon dynamite and pistol to avenge the wrongs of the laboring-man. Consequently he was placed under strict surveillance, as a possible witness or accomplice in an attempt to blow up the residence of a wealthy contractor, and was taken to the county jail before he had really recovered either health or sense. He was discharged from there without being carried to court, it having appeared that he had been in the hospital the night on which the destruction of the house had been undertaken.

With but a dollar in his pocket, and that the hateful gift of still more hateful charity, he travelled eastward, sleeping in empty barns or under the shelter of haycocks, food being given to him as to a tramp, of whom the women were afraid and of whom they thus got rid. He came to Boston at last and sought his wife and child. No one knew anything about them. He spent the night at the station-house. He found his own Assembly broken up; its members had gone out West, just where he had been. He wished them joy of their journey. He thought of committing some petty larceny, that he might procure a lodging, permanent,

for a time, at least; but his hatred to the state and existing authority was too bitter for him to accept even a penalty from her. He continued to live by vagrancy and by speaking in one or another place. After his speeches, a caved-in hat was passed around, to collect contributions for defrayal of the expenses incurred in vindicating the rights of man by the sweat of many words. At such times Wolfgang generally put enough pennies in his pocket to carry him to the next day of excited debate. But he himself had grown weary of warfare and rather longed for the steadiness of daily wages. He had a faith that his wife and daughter would turn up when he could get nothing else to do except to subsist on their earnings.

When Freia had refused to go with her father as spokeswoman, he had left her with almost a curse for her personal desertion of him, the champion of nature's laws, and for her increasing unwillingness to sacrifice herself to the riff-raff of the labor movement. The girl felt like one who had been stunned, partly through hunger, but more through her growing suspicion that her father, whom she had worshipped as the incarnate spirit of the new age of freedom, had simply made a tool of the crassness of indiscriminate crowds, to become an ambitious seeker for his own advancement. He cared for her and her mother when he was well fed. At other times they, unless he could make use of his child, were in the way, and their hunger and cold were reproof to him. Freia took his going as if in a dream. When she knew he had really gone, she felt as if she were on a vacation.

The mother's arms ached for her baby, though her

touch upon its sharp little bones had often given her more sorrow than joy. The surest proof that motherhood is woman's destiny is the sense of robbery she feels when her arms can no longer clasp a baby. The longing eyes of a childless woman follow alike the starveling of the poor or the chubby outlines of the rich man's infant.

The poor have no time to translate their sorrows into aught but work for the morrow. Wolfgang's wife, daughter, and boy counted their little store of money received from the Assembly when it sent off the German, sold their broken furniture, and took the International Line of steamers to Eastport, Maine, to go across from there to Campobello, where Freia had a second cousin once removed, and where, she fondly imagined, they would find the same cordiality which had been accorded to her relatives now dead. But times had changed; the little Sarawac farm had fallen into desuetude. The second cousin once removed fished in winter, wearing three flannel shirts and three pairs of woollen socks, and was inclined to consumption. His wife's day consisted of eighteen hours of hard work and six hours of broken sleep. She was not quite sure how many children she had had, nor where they all now were, yet there were enough of them at home to suggest the undesirability of any more inmates of the house. Still Freia and her mother and brother were heartily welcomed to an equal share of herrings and work.

The little parlor was full of awe for Freia. A picture of Queen Victoria, in mourning robes and widow's cap, hung opposite a colored lithograph of President

Harrison. On one of the walls was a frieze of coffin-plates, which served the double purpose of reminding the occupants of the room of the death of their relatives, and of their own approaching demise. On the high, narrow mantel-piece were small, gay-colored china figures of Ganesha and the peacock and other Hindoo deities, which had been made in England for the Hindoo market; but when the manufacture of idolatrous images had been prohibited, they were sent off for sale as children's toys, and had found their way to St. John, New Brunswick, and then to the island. Rag mats, wrought with designs of animals called domestic, lay upon the floor. Everything was neat and unused, save the photograph album of the present relations and friends.

Not many years before, a descendant of Admiral Owen had gathered there a Sunday-school and taught the villagers the Episcopal Creed and the lost art of sewing. With her departure, the older people returned to the Baptist fold, from which they had strayed, and the children wandered, like flocks of geese, wherever material provender was provided.

Freia had pitiful contempt for all manner of embroidery, and when she found her cousin trying to earn the means to buy cheap finery by this frail resort to self-subsistence, she saw in it but a fresh proof of the wickedness of capital.

"I don't know what you mean," said her cousin. "The *Sentinel* had an advertisement about 'Work at Home,' which I could do without having to go and get it."

"But you sent for it?"

"Yes; I just put a dollar into an envelope, and they sent me back a square of plush and some worsteds and a chromo pattern, and——" She stopped.

"Well?" replied Freia, bitterly.

"I don't see why you need get so angry about it. 'Tain't any business of yours if they did send it back 'cause it warn't done to a T, and if I did have to send for some more silk and worsted."

"Was it right the second time you sent the embroidery?"

"Well, I can't say as it was; but they are an Art Company, and have got to be partickler."

"I don't believe in it, any way," said the girl's mother; "for my second cousin, what was my mother's first cousin, worked her flowers like a Court lady, and the Art Company said it warn't satisfactory, any more than if it had been embroidered by a person from the States."

"It all comes from having anything to do with a company which does not start on an equal basis," answered Freia. "These art people advertise all over the States, and way down into Canada. They never give out, but always take in money; by and by the police find out it is a fraud and burst open their doors and seize lots of envelopes with a dollar bill in each."

In spite of Freia's facts and earnest warning, the cousin still embroidered in faith, and left her city relative to herself. Freia despised patient effort, and her cousin disliked people who worried. The two girls failed to suit each other or to understand each other. How could they, when they did not understand themselves?

Freia's startling ways and haunted eyes and her mother's plaintive meekness were exaggerated in the neighborhood. The boys whistled at the girl as she passed with her yellow hair, and called her carrot-top; and she replied scornfully that she had no use for them. The distance of pasture and wood frightened her. The men talked of smuggling, and of seizures of fishing-schooners, instead of strikes and combinations. The women had no indignant protest against motherhood and wifehood, but raked hay, carried water, and dug potatoes with the same equanimity with which they fried fish or tended their babies. Here and there were better houses and finer people of gentle education, yet Freia found that her poor relatives were as ignored by them as is the day-laborer of the city by the omnivorous capitalist. She went to the Temperance Lodge, where there was more jealousy than earnestness, and to a Sunday-school picnic, where there was more cake than morals. She missed the sullen gloom, pseudo-political economy, and rabid energy which characterized the meetings which she had known.

"I might like the country," she told her mother, "if I were rich and had nothing to do. But the sun is hateful and the bay is too bright and the woods too green; they don't know about the wrongs of humanity, and the people take every thing as natural."

Freia's little brother was happier than he had ever been. He was willing to run on errands or to bale the row-boats, to string herring or to rake hay, if he could only be out-doors and now and then paddle round in the water. He entertained the children with stories of city life, and convinced them that there were more

roads than one in Boston. The men liked him, and when he cried because Freia wanted to go back, one of them offered to keep him for a year, provided his mother would supply him with clothes.

Mrs. Krumm could not ask her relatives to maintain her. Moreover, she knew that Freia needed her as a protector in the city haunts in which they must live. Her spirit had been tamed by her obstreperous husband and ardent daughter. Though she sighed for the peace which she herself had found in the rest of nature, she went back with her child to the close alleys and the stifling air of an attic.

As they sat on the deck of the "Cumberland" and passed Head Harbor Light, Mrs. Krumm would gladly have landed and kept solitary watch at the light-house and been wet by winter fog and sleet, if she need never have heard again of progressive intelligence, authoritative reform, and individual rights. But she ate her lunch of crackers, cheese, and pickles, and watched the children strewing peanut-shells about the floor. She heard the girls of the provinces talking of going out to service; and wondered if the city ladies would like such gay ribbons and free manners in their help. To be sure, she meekly wondered at all that came within reach of her mental vision, and fortunately never had much appetite for food. Sitting thus on the deck, she could not but notice a man of handsome frame and doubtful countenance, who passed and repassed her daughter. He handed Freia an apple. The girl let it lie in her lap. He asked her if she would have some dinner. She shook her head.

"Will your mother have a cup of tea?"

Freia nodded assent, frightened. The tea warmed her parent into gentle garrulity, and the moonlight found the three still sitting on deck. Chatham rejoiced that perhaps he had found a new experience, which might atone to him for the insolence which he considered Brooks had offered him the previous day.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE WOMEN'S UNION.

CHATHAM did not leave the mother and daughter alone on their landing at Boston. He had too much regard for his own reputation to follow them himself, therefore he hired a boy to dog their footsteps until they found a stopping-place and then to report to him. They went to a lodging-house in Warrenton Street, and the little fellow, who thought he had done enough walking for a quarter of a dollar, drew upon his imagination in telling his employer that the two women had taken a second-flight, back room, and were going to stay there all winter.

Chatham therefore decided to wait till his summer flirtations with the upper class had ceased before he renewed his acquaintance with his fellow-passengers of the boat. Freia, who had always seen men coming and going in the Assemblies who were more or less free in manner, merely thought of the stranger as one whose familiarity had been excused by his attention to her mother.

Their money was nearly spent. Freia applied to the District Assemblies and Unions to which her father had belonged for further aid until his return. Their landlady gave them warning to leave. Wearily they sought cheaper lodgings, and endeavored to live by boarding themselves on bread and such tea as they were permitted to make at a neighbor's fire.

Freia must go to work again, that she knew. She wanted neither money nor friendliness from either aristocrats or charities. Also she knew full well that few bosses would knowingly take Wolfgang's daughter. Mrs. Krumm had found a few chores to do for women who were weaker than herself, though Freia could hardly endure the knowledge of her mother's doing scrubbing when she, the child, was young and strong. It had been so good to be hidden from all her former associates that she dreaded going abroad for work. In fact, she had never had many friends except among the propagandists of destruction to the present state of things; and her refusal to curse the rich as rich and her father's waning power of invective, and now his absence, had lost her even those friends whom once she possessed. She and her mother had been back a week and were growing hungrier.

"Haven't you anything left to pawn?" she asked.

The words seemed to fall unheeded upon Mrs. Krumm's ears, but as the girl's hands pressed more heavily upon her shoulder, the mother twirled a thin gold ring upon her finger, as if to take it off. It came slowly over the bony knuckle.

"No, no, not that!" exclaimed Freia, seizing her mother's hand and pushing back the ring.

"There must be honest work somewhere, if I only could find it."

"No, there isn't any work for you and your father; and if there were, he wouldn't take it unless it came from the State and had what he calls a National basis. The men used to give him something on the sly, or he couldn't have gone round arguing all day as he did. I suppose it is natural to forget women-folks when a man has got to educate the masses."

"If I had not got father's blood in me, mother, I could get work to do. I have got up lots of rows, though I don't know if it did any good. I used to think it helped; now I can't seem to see anything clearly. The girls do not get any more wages for all my talking, for there is always some one poorer than somebody else, who will work for nothing. Father said it wasn't any matter if we did starve, if we could get organized. There is no use in trying that dodge any longer. Did you use to think there was a God?"

"Yes."

"Why don't you now?" asked the girl, scornfully.

"Your father wouldn't let me, and now I've forgotten how."

"Well, there isn't one, anybody knows that who lives in this alley. What are we going to do for rent?"

"I don't know; maybe I don't care."

The girl looked at her mother wonderingly, for never before had she known her to answer so indifferently. Was her mother mad, or was she only cold and hungry, after all these miserable months, in which her father had talked of organization and State help, and then had gone off and left them and taken the stump on behalf

of labor? They meanwhile had pawned furniture and clothes, had gone down East, and had come back to wretchedness. They had not heard from Krumm for some time, though they had learned in a vague way that he had been unsuccessful.

The room had grown quite dark while the mother and daughter had been talking. Freia groped for her shawl and bonnet and put them on.

"Where are you going?" asked Mrs. Krumm, who half saw, half guessed her daughter's intentions.

"I don't know; maybe I don't care," said Freia, repeating her mother's words.

"Freia, you are not going to do any wrong? 'cause you know there once was a God, and perhaps He'll come back."

"You are more foolish than father. No, I am not going to do wrong. I don't know what I am going to do." And she went out of the room, leaving her mother in the darkness.

She passed out into the alley, like any other decent girl. She walked briskly down the street, but her pace grew slower as she got farther and farther away and nearer to the Common. A man passed her once, twice, three times before she noticed him. It was Chatham, who, returned from his visit at Saratoga, had begun to think again of his steamer trip and of the girl with the yellow hair. Something in her step attracted his careless gaze, and as he watched her he was sure it was she. He had tact enough to address her respectfully by asking after her mother, but her cold replies boded ill for his curiosity.

"Are you busy now?" he ventured.

With a sudden thought that perhaps he could give her work, she turned to him eagerly:

"No. Work is all I want. Can't you give it to me? Haven't you influence somewhere, somehow?"

He saw she was earnest, and disliked it.

"Tell me where you live, and I'll come and see you and talk it over."

"You can't come to us."

"Can't you come to me?"

"All I want is work," she replied, apparently disregarding his question. "If you can't give it to me, I don't want anything of you." And she went to the other side of a tree on the mall, hoping thus to escape him. He was too quick for her and intercepted her movement.

"Come now, don't be offish; I can get you work, if you really want it. Where do you live?"

Some instinct made her hesitate to give him the address, and she shook off his hand from her shoulder. Unknown to both, a tall policeman had been watching them, who now came up and gave Chatham a vigorous thrust, saying,—

"Here, young man, just you move on, or I'll take you up for what is none of your business." At the same moment, he pushed Freia ahead, between the posts, behind one horse-car and in front of another, until he got her across the street and round a corner.

"Oh, Jack, is that you?" And she burst out crying.

"Look here, no crying; just what were you and he doing?"

"Doing? Nothing. I saw him coming up on the Saint John boat from down East, where we went when

father started out West; he gave mother some tea, and just now he saw me again, and wanted to know where we lived; and I told him I wanted nothing but work, and then you came along, and, oh, I am so thankful!"

"You had a sight better taken up with me, Freia, last spring; just turn about a bit, I must keep on my beat. I want you Freia, lots; the children hain't got any one to look after them properly as their mother did. I'd treat you tip-top, if you'd just say the word. Come, now, Freia, you don't look as you ought to; you're uncommon peaked."

"I can't, Jack. I thought you would forget all about me."

"You ain't the kind of girl a man forgets easy. There ain't no sense in your going on as you do about mending the world. Settle down with me and my young ones; make things easy, just in your own way."

"I can't, Jack; that is just what they said down East. I thought when I went there that I would try to forget about the wrongs of labor. Instead of doing that, I have come back almost determined to speak and make people see that freedom has got to come for each one of us; that only by individual freedom can we get rid of legalized monopoly. I thought I had given it all up, but I cannot get work, and if the Assembly or Union will take me back as speaker, I'll serve them. Only I cannot talk in the way I used to do. It has got to be a separate fight for each one of us; combinations do little good. Each one has got to get himself free; folks cannot all agree on the same wants."

"You talk nonsense, Freia, just as you did last winter, though you have got hold of new remedies. You're

a regular stunner, anyhow. You ought to go it on law and authority, not on freedom. You don't know as much as we policemen. Why, there ain't one man in a hundred as is fit for freedom; we keep the stations pretty well filled up with boys." And the man flourished his billy round a group of lads, who scattered like falling stars.

"Where are you living now?"

As Freia told him, he whistled.

"We can't get any better place with no wages."

He fumbled in his pocket and drew out a bill. "You won't mind taking this from me, 'cause it's understood between us that it don't put you under an obligation to me, and when it's gone just let me know. I ain't the kind that wants a girl to suffer just because she won't marry his particular self."

"Oh, Jack, I wish I could marry you; but I can't see it clear yet."

"Well, just remember what I say now. You better go to hell forever than go in for an inch of free love. I can't go any farther with you; I'll hand you over to Jim: he is on the next beat, and he'll see you home."

"No, no. I'll run straight along; you are so good to me."

"Wish you thought I was more so;" and he squeezed her hand and left her.

Freia soon reached home and showed her mother the five-dollar bill.

"Where did you get it?"

"Jack gave it to me."

"What for?"

"Because I would not marry him."

"I don't see why you can't. It would make things easy, and I could sleep then," said the woman querulously.

"You would not have me give in just because we are hungry. Jack is too good a man for such a poor compliment. What is the matter with you? Do you want father?" she asked, with a sudden comprehension of the universal need of a woman's heart,—the presence of the person or often merely of the condition to which she is accustomed. There is a kind of homesickness, which makes an abused wife or friend still cling to the abuser. Not as sign of weakness is it thus; rather is it proof of the divine power of appropriation, by which a wrong done to her never makes a woman renounce that which has once been a treasure.

"I suppose I do miss your father," answered Mrs. Krumm. "I have got so accustomed to his ways, that what with his going off and the baby's dying, it's awful lonesome now we have come back. I suppose some strong tea might make me less dizzy."

"You shall have it, mamma." And the young girl folded her arms round her mother, who dropped asleep on her daughter's shoulder as Freia stroked her thin hair.

Freia's increased fears concerning her parent made her think again, as of late she had constantly done. What good had attempts at organization ever accomplished for them? In reaching after combined results her father had neglected his individual duty to his family. She had followed his example. The baby might not have died, her mother would not now be so thin, if her father and herself had made their struggles

tend towards immediate self-preservation by labor, rather than towards the creation in others of distrust and defiance of all wealthy people. Oh, if she could only get work! In what way? She knew how to do but one thing, that was to be a coat-baster. She had been brought up in shops where adherence to division of labor was strictly insisted upon, as it prevented an ignorant girl from ever becoming a skilful tailoress, and therefore kept large numbers of girls in the position of humble recipients of small wages. Freia dreaded to go back into that tread-mill of mechanical basting, even if she could have obtained work thereby. So far she had tried in vain to procure it. She was, in fact, "black-listed," for her soul was alive with the wronged energies of her class, which she had poured out in bitter invectives until she was as well known to the contractors of labor as is a portrait in the Rogue's Gallery to the policemen.

The thought of domestic service had never occurred to her, for why should one human being be hired to wait upon the unnecessary needs of another, and to accept such a position would have been virtual denial of the chief factor of progress,—equality. Moreover, as her father's daughter, her few years of life had been spent with men and women, who debated on individualism as against co-operation, and on the abolition of government in favor of the voluntary acceptance of incarnated fraternity; yet she was always seeking for the cause of an effect, and was growing more and more discontented with the readiness with which her father and his comrades had taken the nearest cause as the final cause. Without ability to define her need, she was

searching for the historical reasons of to-day's unrest, and for a substratum in philosophy which should ally human act to human thought, and that varied thought to its infinite source.

Still, work she must have on any terms. She could not subject herself again to the risk of meeting Chatham, nor to the acceptance of further aid from Jack.

As she tried to solve the justice or injustice of their life, and to think of something to do, she remembered wandering one Sunday afternoon into a building on Boylston Street, where a woman was talking. What was said had seemed to her a pleasant illusion for rich people to hear and cherish, yet the recollection of the speaker's voice and manner had often soothed her. Thinking of it now, she resolved to go there and see if any one needed her. She was tired and faint, and her purpose fell off into a dream, and she slept with her mother. They were like two tired children, knowing part of life so well through bitter, personal experience, and understanding neither the part nor the whole, from want of mental training.

The next morning she started to find the Women's Union. She knew not that she could go nowhere without attracting attention. Her uncommon height, her broad shoulders, her full throat, her massive head with its weight of yellow hair, her dark-blue eyes, and her mouth, as sad as a baby's just making up its mind to cry, made her a goddess of the new liberty for the sons of men. And so it was that when she entered the room, the superintendent came forward and asked her if she wanted any thing.

"I want work."

"What can you do?"

"I can baste coats."

"Is that all?"

"Oh, don't send me off! I will do anything, if you will only try me."

Her piteous tone roused the compassion of Mrs. Wehke, who was at the other end of the room and who had been watching her. Surely this was no ordinary case of poverty. The ladies took counsel together, and Mrs. Wehke, who was one of the managers, drew from her the story of her want. Their sympathetic knowledge could understand alike the righteousness and foolishness of her indignation against capital and long hours of labor. They saw in her a suppliant for work and a possible pupil for their classes. But they could not recommend her even for housework, which seemed an incongruity in thought when they looked at her. Mrs. Wehke took her to the lunch-room and made her eat. As Freia saw the girls coming in for their noonday meal, she envied them their happy independence. Work, work, was the inmost cry of her heart. Why could she not wait upon them? the room was full and the attendants were few.

"Please let me help," she pleaded, notwithstanding her previous feeling of the uselessness of one person waiting upon another.

They did let her, for they could not resist the eager entreaty of her restless eyes, in spite of their doubt of her ability. She carried her tray so deftly, and took the orders so beseechingly, that when, at the end of the hour, she begged to be allowed to come again, she was not refused.

Her mother did not go to sleep hungry that night. The next morning Freia was at the Union long before she was wanted, and did what was needed later with a discernment which surprised herself. Her nerves were calmed by the novelty of the work and the sympathy and quietness of the managers, to whom she was determined to become necessary. In a few days it was arranged that a permanent place should be given her as waitress in the lunch-room, where the shop-girl and the woman living on her income met, each proving to the other the solidarity of humanity. She waited on all alike, with a wonder in her heart, which often passed into her face, at her first encounter with the truth that every one works, and that to each her work is the hardest and yet the only work she can do.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE UNPRODIGAL FATHER.

FREIA and her mother began to live in more comfort. Mrs. Krumm often came to the lunch-room, and Freia herself would bring her a bowl of soup, with such eagerness that it drew many a smile from her customers. Now and then both stayed to some evening lecture or entertainment. No one spoke of differences in station, only of degrees of education, and to that Freia agreed as matter of fact rather than of theory. The girl secretly hoped her father would not appear for a long time, but the wife watched for her husband

round the corners of the streets and up and down the malls of the Common, for she heard he had been seen in the city.

One fall day, when the brown elm-leaves rustled round her feet as she rested on an iron settee in Tremont Mall, a man seated himself beside her. He shook the ashes out of his clay pipe, stuck it into his pocket, and put his hands round his long knees in their threadbare pants. He looked very poor and sick.

"Wolfgang, is that you?" asked his wife, as she drew closer to him.

"Yes, it is me, what is left of me. I had taken a notion to advertise for you, Mollie; but seeing as how I have found you, and all the more so as cash is low, it is just as well I didn't."

"I have wanted you, Wolfgang, very bad. Where have you been?"

"Out West."

"Did you get them organized?"

"No. I don't care a damned cent for them; they went back on me and said I had no power for argument, and that what the movement wanted nowadays was facts. I told them I was a living fact in myself, and they said that didn't count, unless I was a bundle of statistics. I told them that feelings and aches and hunger and bosses' insolence had more truth in them than a lot of figures. 'Twarn't no use."

"Well?"

"Well, they dropped me. The men have got very learned, and talk of single land-tax and profit-sharing and all sorts of ways of cutting the devil up in pieces instead of putting him down whole. I made my great

speech, and the police were after me. The Assembly got frightened and sent me off. That is about the size of it."

"Where else have you been?"

"When I wasn't talking, I was in a hospital, or else walking home."

"What are you going to do now?"

"I supposed you'd take care of me. Where's Freia, married to Jack?"

"No; she wouldn't have him."

"Well, I don't blame her. He'd be hard on me if she'd taken him."

The two ceased questions and answers. The man relighted his pipe; the tobacco was vile. There is nothing which more marks suffering, especially the misery of poverty, than its absence of garrulity. The imagination is torpid, and a few facts suffice to fill in the intervals of time.

"When are you going home?" asked Wolfgang after a long silence.

"Now," said she, rising slowly.

The fulfilment of a wish is often its destruction, and thus Mrs. Krumm found it. Her husband absent, she wanted him; returned, she dreaded him. Where would he sleep? How much would he eat? These were practical matters, which relaxed her warmth of welcome. They reached home with effort, for it was not a short walk for rheumatic limbs.

"Here's your father, Freia," said her mother, pushing open the door of the room as far as its creaking hinges would allow, as if to give free entrance to the cloud of smoke which surrounded her husband.

The girl stood still. There was only one other man

whom she would less willingly have seen, and that one, she feared, had observed her going in and out of the lunch-room. Her father, however, was easily contented with her slight degree of cordiality.

"I'm deucedly hungry. Haven't you got any victuals?" he remarked, with more deference in his manner than he had shown to his wife.

It does not take long to set the tables of those who have little to eat. Bologna sausage, bread, and tea made their meal. The man ate so much that Freia gave up her share, and her mother would have done the same if the girl had not compelled her to swallow her tea. A pot of geranium bloomed in the window, which was so spotlessly clean that not a ray of sunlight was lost as it came through the narrow panes. With Wolfgang's coming, the flower looked unsuitable: the room had taken an atmosphere of restlessness and gloom. Freia lit the lamp and brought a newspaper. The man soon laid himself down on the bed and slept. Freia and her mother took his coat, laid it on the floor, and slept upon it themselves. Neither of them spoke of his home-coming.

The morning brought its own restorative, even if the air blew through a close alley. It was pay-day and Freia pleased herself in thinking of the dainties she should bring home,—a bit of steak or one or two chops—no, three—and some fresh rolls. She determined to hire the little closet next to her mother's room for her own use. When night came and her father had eaten the chops she had bought for them all, and her mother's eyes were blinded with a steady mending of her husband's clothes, Freia's heart again rebelled.

Days passed. Wolfgang did not seek for work; his old companions were surly to him. Occasionally they gave him a quid of tobacco, but no one wanted him round. It was worse than in the West: there he had consoled himself with the thought of what he would be when at home again and leader in his own Assembly. Now he found his desire to rule checked in every way. His daughter's course disappointed him. Through his child he had hoped to regain his ascendency, but she absolutely refused to go with him to any of the halls. Her one desire was to save money enough to send him back to Germany. In their days of comparative ease she and her mother had visited his people, and Freia well remembered the fields of red poppies and blue bachelor-buttons and the black bread with caraway-seed. They had brought away with them many a homespun garment and cheap brooch, but in a terrible shipwreck they had lost everything, and from that time their misfortunes had begun. And now, when it seemed as if the girl were working herself into a nobler idea of individualism than she had ever gained under her father's plans for representative paper or communistic socialism, which would make the State more authoritative than ever, he had come back to hinder this much-needed progress of herself in her own comprehension.

The change in Freia had not been sudden, but, like all processes of growth, her opinions had been affected by her limited experience, and were slowly assuming a different character from that which she herself would have anticipated a few years ago. Owing to her unusual appearance and her natural, ready eloquence, she

early had been used by her father and his friends as their mouth-piece. When the family wretchedness began to be permanent in consequence of Wolfgang's loss of work and his absorption in the labor question, she had regarded herself as bound to obey him in speaking for and with him. The innate refinement of her nature, as she passed from girlhood into young womanhood, made the declarations of her father and his comrades increasingly distasteful to her. Her generous heart was made sore by the avoidance of the working-girls, who feared to be seen with her, lest they should imperil their situations in the shops where they worked. She became reserved, proud, indignant, despairing, perplexed. Her own experience proved her father to be wrong. Accustomed from her earliest years to hearing debates and to much reading of a certain kind of newspapers and pamphlets, her mental powers had increased.

Her real interest in books was centred in history, which she had read by snatches and in desultory manner through magazines, and sometimes at odd hours in books of value at the Public Library. In this way she appeared to have more grasp of facts than she really possessed, for her quick intuitions enabled her to marshal her historical items in favor of her own theories. Still this chaotic reading had been a large factor in finally enabling her to throw off her father's thraldom over her mind. She was beginning to understand that a revolution should be the slow development of popular sentiment; that while public opinion was forming, individuals must labor and wait, and that neglect of individual duty made life harder in all its personal relations. She had great sympathy, as she

read, with the starving children of inventors, and with the aching hearts of wives whose husbands perished in some ill-fated but impetuous mob before general sentiment had been ready to uphold it. If her life had been more fortunate she would have looked at the other side of such uprisings and seen their importance in creating the very convictions which future years would acknowledge as triumphant in their truth.

In her intercourse at the Union she had again found the falsity of her previous opinions. There was no antagonism of class interests, no usurpation of official authority, no craving for public excitement among those whom she met there. Each one was actuated by a simple, honest desire to make her neighbor happier, either in mind or in worldly affairs. There were lectures and discussions and opportunities for special improvement in many ways. More valuable than the specific or general knowledge she gained was her growing perception of the worth of character over outward circumstance; of the healing power of sympathy; of the justice in long views of life; of the moral relations between cause and effect, and of the inevitableness of individual obligation. The every-day cheerfulness and high purpose of the workers and their dependence upon personal rectitude, in making possible any kind of human brotherhood, showed her the living connection between theories and realizations.

If her father had not returned, she felt that life after all might have become a blessing. Now it was very hard to go home day after day to witness his infatuation with his hobbies, and to be aware of his laziness. As she came in one night, after struggling with herself

to remember that he was her father, and therefore entitled to her compassion if not to her respect, she detected a new odor in the tobacco smoke which filled the room. The supper impressed her with a sense of unexpected plenty and ill omen.

"How did you get this, mother?"

"That is my affair, not yours," interposed Wolfgang. "I am the head of this family." And he puffed away.

As the smoke passed across her face, she recognized it as like that which came from Chatham's pipe on the Saint John steamer, when he had given her mother a cup of tea. It had attracted her notice then, and, impressionable to all physical sensations, she had not forgotten it. It was impossible that her father should know their companion of that day. Why should the thought of him come to her mind?

"Where did you get your tobacco, father?"

"Well, now, liebchen, can't a man buy it when his daughter looks after him? Not that you mightn't be more liberal than you are, liebchen, yet you are a good girl and have treated me fairly well."

Freia was puzzled. He never called her by the German diminutive unless he wanted something. Her father watched her furtively; he knew her countenance well enough to see that she was hesitating between curiosity and anger. He doubted whether she would question him further, and he was eager to speak.

"So you don't like tobacco, do you? Where do you think I got it?"

Freia shook her head.

"'Tain't no secret. I met a gentleman, tip-top

class, a few days ago. He was uncommon glad to see me; says I'm just the man he wanted to run things for him; he thinks just as I do about the State's obligation to us, so he gave me a little cash. He wants to come and call on you as soon as I'll let him. I'll ask him to dinner Sunday."

"And let him buy it before he comes," said Freia.

"I've no objection, seeing as he wants to come to us and live as we do. He says capital is rotten."

"Where did you find him?"

"Oh, he's heard of me for a long time, and of my speeches, and he'd be pleased to meet you, Freia."

The girl was sure that the person of whom her father spoke was the stranger whom she had seen on the steamer; yet how absurd it was to be affected by a whiff of Heidseke tobacco. She had never told her mother of her second meeting with him, nor of her suspicion that it was he who had dogged her footsteps and had seen her, with her father, coming from the Women's Union.

Freia was right: Chatham had caught sight of her again. It was easy to learn her father's name and then to meet him as he lounged round a new hall which had lately been hired by a number of new reformers, in which he met with a kinder reception than was usually accorded him. This, however, she did not know as she asked,—

"Why can't you let him alone, father? If you'll keep quiet, I'll take care of both you and mother."

"I'm going to join a new party. I'm going to make the Georgists see I'm good for something yet. I'll put an end to private property in land by letting——"

"I should think you would be tired of never owning yourself, father. You have belonged to every party there is going, and they have all been failures. Why not just mind your own business?"

"That's self-interest, *laissez-faire*, liebchen."

The girl turned away disheartened. Her own knowledge was not yet sufficiently consecutive to enable her to point out his mistakes; it is always harder to argue with one's own family than with strangers. It never occurred to her that Chatham would really come, even if her father asked him. She little knew how much trouble a double-minded and vain man will take rather than lose the pleasing consciousness of his success with women.

It was a dark night when Chatham again saw Freia on the street. It was impossible for her to avoid his distant, courteous politeness, though as she came near home he left her with a studied indifference which piqued her. He knew he had played his part well, and was not surprised that the next time she met him with more ease. He talked with her of books and travels, and was astonished to find how much she knew and how much independence she possessed. He was not quite sure that he liked her, or even that she was worth the trouble he was taking to understand her. She never allowed him to accompany her more than a few blocks, wherever he might chance to find her. She dared not refuse to speak to him, from fear of her father, who seemed somehow to be in his power.

Wolfgang, meanwhile, had become a constant attendant at the new hall; and though both mother and daughter were aware that his present absorption in a

fresh mode of equalization of wealth and labor would be followed, like other Utopian visions of his, by bitter reaction, they took comfort in the quiet of their evenings, which no one disturbed.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE SHIPWRECK.

CHATHAM was a specious sinner, desirous of his own approval concerning his methods of approach, and caring little for the righteousness of an end. The companions of his boyhood had called him peculiar; the friends of his manhood did the same. Neither they nor he himself knew how depraved he was; not so much in act as in possibility. Women tested him and disliked him, yet he was attracted by a pure woman in the same way that others are charmed by the movements of a snake. He knew that in the end purity absorbed evil; but it was a disagreeable process for one bent on betrayal of the good to witness; though once his whole nature had bowed in honest homage before a maiden. He also enjoyed new and strange sensations. Since it had been the fashion to talk of socialism and to be more promiscuous in knowing day-laborers, he had sauntered around the clubs, unions, and district-meetings of the workingmen, and picked up a selection of stories and remarks about various plans for amelioration of the fact that mankind is born, which he regaled at dinners and balls. His faultless dress, his table

manners, his bits of travel, his excellent English, and his general good address kept him in the social circles, to which he belonged by birth.

If his father had lived, or his mother had been less of a nervous invalid, or his sister had been less a Puritan, he might have been different, and his curled moustache might have been natural without the aid of an alcohol lamp.

Let any one who smiles at the silver-mounted mysteries of a girl's toilet-table examine the articles of a man's dressing-bureau, with its brushes for hair and beard and scissors for curling and cutting; its row of shining razors, and perfumery to cloud the water or destroy all traces of tobacco smoke. Chatham was an adept in every art of the toilet and bade defiance to age.

He had decided to specialize this winter by devoting it to such absorption of socialistic tendencies in their extreme form as would afford him amusement at the expense of those who, if wrong, were yet terribly in earnest, and whose earnestness should have shielded them from mockery. He did not seek well-officered unions, with reputation for more or less common-sense, but frequented the leagues, composed of the unemployed and unskilled, two-thirds of whom were foreigners, who used words, but understood neither causes nor facts, and who made the cultivation of discontent their shibboleth, and the forcible disruption of the State their Mecca. Here he had met Wolfgang, and was at once struck by the man's ignorance and power of invective. He wormed himself into the German's confidence, and when he suspected that Wolfgang's daughter was the

girl who had affronted him on the Common, he congratulated himself on the opportunity afforded him of forming plans to harm another. He enjoyed the mental manœuvres and devious side-tracks needed in committing a wrong much more than the wrong itself, so that his intention purposely often stopped short of consummation. His self-approbation had never recovered from the check it had received through Brooks, and the grudge which he had long cherished towards Mr. Stanton because of his high-mindedness was increased by his being a friend of Brooks. Consequently he had made a memorandum in his list of winter work to annoy them as far as was consonant with his keeping the *entrée* to the Stantons' house. It was therefore with a mockery of resignation that he accepted the special providence which soon cast Frank Stanton in his way at a meeting of the league.

Frank had left the island early in September and had come to Boston. His mother's luxurious apartments unnerved his glowing ardor. Georgism, socialism, anarchism were none of them hasty enough for his youth, and dynamite and arson were contrary to the tenderness of his principles. As he could do nothing which was more against his taste, and yet more consonant with his convictions, he had joined a small brotherhood, composed of one minister, four or five artisans, and a school-boy, the young fellow endeavoring to counterbalance the selfishness of preparation for Harvard by eating in primitive fashion and sleeping in a room with other men. Frank's heart warmed towards this ingenuous youth who loved the classics and hoped to consecrate them to present uses. A close friendship

sprung up between them, which acted as counter-irritant to the inconveniences of the brotherhood.

Chatham had heard that Frank had joined this inner circle, and laid his plans to bring him under Wolfgang's influence, which he was sure would be a grief to Frank's father, who, aristocratic capitalist as he was and generous helper of every worthy aim, yet foresaw in the denunciations of the labor movement injury to republican principles, and steadily excluded from his business any man connected with a union.

But Chatham miscalculated the result of Frank's careful training. A fellow bred under the influence of Dunbar and Laughlin at Harvard University could not accept any scheme proposed by labor as substitute for the deductions of Jevon's political economy, and Macvane's courses on constitutional history had widened his vision, though they had also intensified his desire for reform. Frank realized that abolition of property in land would lead to abolition of other property-holding; that State control meant invasion of individual rights; and that the personality which made enterprise succeed deserved some return for investment of itself. Sure that Hegelian teaching would finally lead mankind to find unity in all these philanthropic contradictions, he was a Bayard *sans peur, sans reproche;* or a modern Hercules, holding out his life for any man to take; or a latter-day Buddha, who would let a famished person prey on his life, as the Asiatic apostle offered his body to the lean tiger.

His mother's idolized ideal, he was the heart's dream of many a girl, who was abashed as she saw his forehead knotting, his eyes darkening, or his mouth settling

into lines of gloom when conversation drifted into trivialities or little meannesses marred a girlish act. He had never passed through the blighting process of flirtations, nor had he any desire to appropriate unto himself the largess of a girl's love. But he longed to gather the sadness of a working-woman's lot into his own keeping, and by his devotion to change her weakness into strength, her weariness into gladness. The girl whom in the spring he had seen tossed from one contractor's mercy to another, with her yellow hair loosened and falling round her throat, as if she would strangle herself to escape from the misery of never being wanted, as she was flung down the steep, narrow stairs, till some one had caught her, had somehow, somewhere, disappeared. Yet she always loomed up before him and increased his conviction that there was an individual duty before each possessor of wealth to aid in producing better conditions for the laborer by personal sacrifice.

There was a small French restaurant, which a few of the French Internationalists still frequented, and where invocations were chanted to the radiant souls of all citizens who were endeavoring to change the present French Republic into a socialistic commonwealth. Meals were cheap and dainty, the conversation hot and aggressive, but never without that outward courtesy which handicaps a row. Frank took his dinner here as often as his conscience allowed him to desert the less appetizing dishes of the Brotherhood. Chatham also was a frequent visitor on account of the salad and the French language. The two men had had just that degree of recognition of each other which can be increased or neglected. It pleased Chatham to increase it.

"Come with me and hear Wolfgang Krumm to-night," he said to Frank. "He is a spurious leader, and will go out soon, but for delightful mixing of things and for rousing one to an inordinate thirst for dynamite and revolution he has no equal."

"Where is he to speak?"

"In the new hall which the Revolutionists have dedicated to the goddess of humanity."

"Who is she?"

"The impersonation of *laissez-faire*, gilded with the authoritative socialism of the social democracy. They have a statue of the Virgin, transformed into a redundant Ceres, with whiskey-flasks and cigars in her cornucopia, to which they repeat their incantations when members are admitted."

"Do you belong?"

"I! I never compromise myself by any oath. Quaker descent or modern shrewdness, as you will. I am only one of the audience; it is a public gathering this evening."

"I cannot go now, I have a lesson to give; but, thanks, I'll come round later."

"Are you chewing the cud of self-support?"

"No, I am winnowing the chaff from the wheat, that others may know how to support themselves."

"Leave a few basketfuls for the devil to glean."

"I'd sooner have the devil prowling round my barns than you," thought Frank, as he went to his class of boys, to teach them book-keeping. It was late when he finished, yet because he was in haste to go, he made his explanations with more care than usual. At last, his conscience satisfied, he hurried to the hall. It was

crowded, for a successful strike of longshoremen had given a new impetus to other labor organizations. Wolfgang had just risen to speak as Frank entered. He listened, amazed that men could be patient with such hyperbole of trash. Yet the speaker roused in him a sense of protest against the civil powers, as Wolfgang contrasted individualism and socialism, making the latter the coming slavery of a central bureau, and the former the freedom of a low self-interest. All capitalists were knaves; all wealth was robbery; class was pitted against class. His words waxed warm as he closed with a simile likening the State to a shipwrecked vessel.

"Even on the ocean capital claims its own. We had left the land owned by man, and thought we had only to obey the winds and currents until we landed in America. But there came a storm, and the vessel was sinking. Human flesh must be saved, so the first-class passengers were nicely lifted into the boats, which carried them safely to land, while the second-class freight of humanity was pushed below deck, and stayed there, imprisoned, cramped, frozen, mutilated, till capitalists were secured. Then the huge vessel broke asunder and the sharks seized us, the second-class passengers, who had had no chance for self-rescue, and scattered the human pieces over the sea, red with the blood of emigrants, while capital, invested income, safe on land, gloated over its deliverance and thanked heaven it had not been steerage food for fishes."

He sank down exhausted by his own vehemence. A girl passed swiftly up the aisle and put her arm around his dizzy head. She stood there, tall, strong,

fearless, avenging. The applause stopped. Those in the rear stood on tiptoe to see what was coming. Those near, who saw the surges of feeling rise and fall over her cheeks and throat, and her eyes glowing like coals of fire, waited with fear. She opened her mouth; no word came at her command; she breathed deeply and came down to the edge of the platform.

"Shame on you all!" She had gotten her voice. "Shame on you to gall the old man into a wrath, which is stimulated by your applause! You bring him here to lash you into violent action against that very capital to which you owe your living. Slaves of capital, are you? No; slaves of your own weakness, which you transmit to your children. You clamor for the freedom of self-interest, and let pass the freedom of self-restraint. You prefer the slavery of ignorance to the slavery of the State's autocracy. Keep it, it is good enough for you; you need a master. We are second-class in spite of all we say; we are steerage passengers. A saviour comes among us; we do not know him; we call him names because he is not like ourselves. He told you," she continued, pointing to her father, "that capitalists were saved when the vessel sank in which we crossed the Atlantic. True! Capitalists were saved, yet there were capitalists who would not let themselves be rescued first, but who stayed with us steerage folk. Who was it but a man of capital who put my mother in the boat, and who quickly lashed my father to the life-preservers? Who was it but that man's son, a first-class passenger, who bore me from the very jaws of the shark, and flung me on to a floating spar and guided me to land, and then swam back and forth, saving man,

woman, and child, caring no more for his life than for a straw when second-class steerage could be saved. When capital sacrifices itself for labor, let us not denounce it. Give up your rebellion against wealth. Labor needs it for its own development. Stop your talk of concentrated class revenge. Human freedom is imperilled by unskilled labor and ignorant suffrage. Let us steerage folk forgive the wrong that does too often come to us till we have learned how to respect ourselves in our labor and are not envious of others in their wealth, which they won through labor."

Her father raised his head as she spoke and gazed at her wildly. His gray hairs shook and his arms trembled as if he would have shaken her. She stepped back and pressed her hand on his shoulder to keep him quiet. In vain.

"Damn you!" he shouted; "you've betrayed the cause. The sharks of hell seize you!"

"Order! order!" shouted the chairman. Everything was wild confusion. Some tugged at Wolfgang, others at Freia, as if to part two would-be combatants. The girl would surely have been hurt if some one stronger than the others had not caught her and pulled her through the crowd on the platform, down a side-door into the street, and, hailing a herdic, put her into it, jumping in himself after her. Frank Stanton was none too quick, the crowd was behind them; he thrust some money into the driver's hand and bade him turn out of the main street into some side passage and then go back and round the Common until he told him to stop.

Freia was sobbing hysterically; Frank scarcely knew

it. He was as much excited as she. Here close beside him was the girl whose life he had saved a few years ago. He remembered how her hair had helped in rescuing her then, and now understood why it had haunted him in the crowded workroom a few months ago. Again he had saved her from—what? He thought of Miss Aften rather than of his mother, as one to whom he must turn in his perplexity concerning Freia, for, if with her father, she certainly needed protection. On went the herdic, but at a slower pace. The electric light from the Public Gardens showed each of its occupants to the other.

"Take me home," said Freia, feebly. "I did not know you were there."

"Where is home?"

"Six, Koppe's Alley."

"I promise you I will. Trust me till then. You know me, then?" he asked, after she had grown quiet.

"Yes."

"Where have you been?"

"Working, hiding."

"Why did you not let me know?"

"I could not."

"And I saw you in Brady's sewing-rooms, when you couldn't get the work. Was that generous in you, not to speak to me?"

"Yes."

Frank was silent. Then he spoke: "I lost sight of you after you reached land, when the shipwreck came. I hunted for you everywhere the next day; they told me your friends had found you. Was it so?"

"Yes, we were taken care of, and at last we came to Boston."

They had reached the alley. Freia begged him not to drive to the door, but to let her get out and go home by herself. He knew she was right, for even herdics excite gossip in some courts. "My father," she said, hesitatingly, as the door opened, "where is he?"

"I will find him; he shall be safe. I may come and see you to-morrow?"

She gave neither assent nor refusal, but went past him down the alley into the tenement. Frank drove back to the hall. The crowd had gone. Some one told him that Wolfgang had not been hurt and had gone home. The young man must fain wait till the next day before he could learn more of either father or daughter.

Unknown to him, that shipwreck scene had given the dominant impulse to his life, which had led him more and more to consecrate it to the service of the steerage folk, as Freia had called those who labored in ignorance.

CHAPTER XX.

A TEA-PARTY.

FREIA'S father reached home before his daughter. The men cared little about him, now she was gone. "Rather rough on a dad to go back on him, when he's old and has given his life for a cause;" "Beat it out of her, or she'll treat you worse;" "She's got more

guff in her than you have;" "She's worth a dozen of slobbering old men;" such were the remarks he heard and the consolation offered him as he picked up his stick and fumbled his way out of the hall. It was not the insult she had offered him in contradicting him which stung him so much as the perception that his days of oratory were over, and that his daughter had arisen greater than he. He trudged home as best he could, a broken-down old man, a forsaken demagogue. He found his wife darning his socks. He would have liked to have sworn at her and called her by bad names, but he had seldom given her anything worse than neglect and the force of habit was strong upon him.

"You'd better have taught your girl to stay at home and mind her own business," he exclaimed.

"What's happened to Freia?"

"It's always what has happened to Freia. What has happened to me?"

The woman saw that her husband was strangely affected. She took his hat from him and hung it on a peg and put his stick in the corner. This unusual attention soothed him a little. She poured him out a cup of tea, asking, "Where's Freia?"

"Gone to the devil."

"What do you mean, Wolfgang?" was the frightened reply.

"I mean she's given me the lie in public, and I have sent her to hell."

"Wolfgang, Wolfgang," sobbed his wife.

"Stop your fooling, wife, or I'll——" But the door opened and Freia entered, like a tall wraith.

"I am very sorry; I did not mean to, father."

"You traitress! you canting wench!"

"Stop, Wolfgang," said his wife, her meekness all gone.

"Let him go on, mother: I deserve it all."

"You spawn of the devil!"

"Wolfgang!" exclaimed his wife, taking her daughter by the shoulders, pushing her into her room, and turning the key on her.

Wolfgang had fallen in a swoon and was deaf to all his wife's entreaties. She waited on him till he recovered consciousness, and put him to bed with the tenderness of a mother towards a wayward child. Then she unlocked the door into her daughter's narrow room and lay down by her on the single-sized cot.

"Freia, are you awake?"

"Yes, mother."

"What has happened?"

"Nothing much, only when father said at dinner that he was going to speak to-night, I thought I'd go down to the Hall and see if I couldn't persuade the men to let him off. They kept me so late at the lunch-room that when I got to the Hall father had just risen to speak, and then he went on—you know his way—till he spoke about the shipwreck, and said that capitalists would have let us all drown as food for sharks. I could not bear that, mother, and I believe I said so. I don't rightly know what I did say, only it wasn't father's way, and he damned me; and then the crowd got hold of us, and some one took me out of it all and brought me home."

"Who was it?"

"Mr. Stanton, the young man who saved me; it was the older one who saved you."

"Poor child, mother loves you."

"I know she does. Never mind, mother, let's go to sleep." And the girl turned her face towards the wall.

It was long before either of them slept, though neither thought the other knew it.

The family of three ate their breakfast as usual. Wolfgang seemed to have forgotten about the previous evening; he acted like one who had lost his memory. Report of the incident of the evening had reached the Women's Union, and many questions were asked Freia on her appearance the next morning. She seemed humble, and would say nothing more than "I am very sorry." Kind-hearted curiosity ceased questioning her, and she was left to her work, though she was conscious of being watched, as if the managers feared some sudden outbreak. As she was going home at night, she was joined by Chatham.

"I am glad to see, Miss Krumm, that you escaped unhurt; it was quite miraculous."

"Quite so."

"Is your father well?"

"Yes; he seems to have forgotten all about it."

"Indeed! he couldn't have known what he was saying; but permit me to express my admiration of you as a public speaker."

"I am not one."

"What are you, then?"

"A poor girl earning an honest living."

"There is no necessity for that, Freia."

"My name is Krumm, Mr. Chatham," with emphasis on the Mr.

"Pardon, I thought you did not like equality. Who took you off last night?"

"A man."

"Who was he?"

"I did not ask his name."

"Had you ever spoken to him before?"

"No."

"How did he know where you lived?"

"I told him."

"Oh!"

"Good-night, Mr. Chatham," with the same emphasis on the Mr.

"Must you be so strict in sending me away?"

"Yes. Good-night."

He was rather glad to leave her. He thought he had found out that she did not know who had rescued her; and he was content that she should be ignorant, as he himself did not know, and supposed it was some stranger of whom he should never hear. Moreover, she had made him very uncomfortable. If she had such spirit as she manifested the night before, she would be a very difficult person to manage, even as an acquaintance. She would never be afraid to call him what he really was. Her present indifference, on the other hand, after such an exciting scene, made her appear too commonplace to be worth his pursuit perhaps. Freia had played her part and guarded her secret well.

Chatham's next move was to discover what impression last evening's events had made upon Frank Stanton. He had missed him in the general excitement.

The newspapers had spoken of a meeting at Revelationists' Hall of certain extremists, which had ended in a disturbance between the two factions, each of which wanted control of the Assembly, but no names had been given and no injuries recorded. He found Frank at the restaurant, and without being invited seated himself at the same table and ordered his dinner of bouillon, friture, and claret. Never be in a hurry when one wants to learn what is none of his business, was Chatham's motto, so he read the evening paper and discussed English politics with Frank.

"By the way, speaking of Trafalgar Square, Stanton, what did you think of last night's exhibition? Pretty scene, wasn't it?"

"I should not have chosen your adjective; it was very painful to me."

"Naturally so to you, perhaps. I must say it was an uncommon one any way."

"What became of the old man?"

"I don't know. I saw him going out of the Hall, rather crestfallen, but whole. At one time I was afraid he might come to pieces. His daughter got off too; they say she was not injured. Have you heard anything about her?"

"Only that last spring she spoke in the same way."

"Her qualities would not be very agreeable ones to live with."

"Possibly not," said Frank, with a touch of scorn in his voice.

"How did the thing impress you as a whole?—like a put-up job, a good bit of acting?"

"Not at all. I thought every one was in dead earnest, and I was sorry all round."

"That's just about the way one feels in seeing a row for the first time, but one gets accustomed to the rant. I go there often instead of going to the theatre."

"There's more reality in it, but less pleasure."

"Just the other way with me; I like to see real life wriggle. She was uncommon handsome, though, Wolfgang's daughter."

"Was she? I did not notice."

Chatham eyed him carefully, and was satisfied. He emptied his claret, left his vegetable salad half eaten, and went off. Frank waited till time enough had elapsed for Chatham to be out of sight, and then rose.

"Course of toothpicks, sir," said the garçon.

The young man muttered something crossly and strode out of the entry, wondering whether Freia would let him call upon her and whether half-truths were lies. But he would sooner have told his mother that Freia had almost been in his arms than have allowed Chatham to even suspect he knew her.

He took his way to the girl's home. It was more devoid of the necessities of life than he could have imagined possible. Whether the girl's embarrassment or his were the greater would have been hard to tell. Maternal gratitude relieved the awkwardness of his entrance. Mrs. Krumm dusted a chair, though it was perfectly clean, and handed it to him.

"I am sure we are under great obligations to you for saving Freia's life last night. She isn't used to that kind of thing, but she is very much obliged to you, just the same."

"She is entirely welcome," replied Frank, twirling his hat.

"I hope you don't think she goes there often. She wanted last night to get the men to let her father off, but they kept her so late where she's working that he had begun. He isn't exactly in his right mind or it would not have happened."

"What are you doing, Miss Krumm?"

"We call her Freia, sir."

"It is a pretty name."

"We gave it to her because her father wanted her to be a goddess of liberty."

"Was she ever?"

"Yes, sir; when she was a little girl her father used to put her into his tableaux, and she looked so pretty. He'd mount her on a table, put a red cap on her hair, a knife in her hand and a basket, so as to cut off the heads of the kings and their ministers; and she would sing——"

"I don't think Mr. Stanton cares to hear about those days, mother," interrupted Freia.

"I was only going to say, sir, how you see it comes natural for her to speak."

"Mother, I wish you wouldn't; it was all a long time ago," urged the girl.

"Then you do not do it now?" asked Frank of her.

"I did do a little of it now and then, but I have not done any of it since last spring."

"Why not?"

"Because it did no good to others, and did me harm." He waited as if for her to finish.

"I lost my place, and the bosses would not take me

anywhere, and I began to see that the girls who were the best workers were freer than I was, and had more money to spend, and——"

She colored and stopped.

"And——" repeated Frank.

"I did not see how all rich people could be bad, and when I talked against them I did it because father told me I ought; and——" Her confusion was pitiable, but Frank would not spare her, even if he might have ceased to question her, for everything about her was of anxiety to him.

"Well?" he said.

"Do not make me tell you, sir. I never forgot the shipwreck." And she covered her face with her apron.

"Forgive me, Miss Krumm. I never thought of that or I would not have urged you to go on. I am so sorry." His tone was so genuinely pitiful of her that she gave a little nervous laugh, and half recovered her composure.

"Why did you not tell me, and let me help you?"

She shook her head, and her mother answered for her: "She could never do that, sir. You had saved us unknown to yourself. You only knew it was just some steerage folks, and we had not any right to impose ourselves on you. We did not rightly know your name for a long time, and then we saw it in the papers that you had done something else, and was the same young man who had saved people's lives when the ship went down; so we knew who you were, and kind of remembered you."

"You told me last night that it was you whom I saw at Brady's when you wanted work," Frank answered,

turning to Freia, though he wished he had not so spoken when he saw how her cheeks flushed.

"I never thought of you, sir, till you pushed the door wide open that I need not bump against the wall, and then like a flash I thought it was you, because I had seen you in the streets and you had been pointed out to me. It was your father who caught me when I got to the bottom of the stairs and took me into the office and helped me."

"My father?"

"Oh, yes; I know it was he. He shut the door till I got quiet. I believe I fainted. Then he gave me some money and let me go into the street out the side way, so that no one could speak to me again. Oh, he is so good! You don't know how good he was. I wish I could wait on him and do his little jobs all the rest of my life."

"Have you often seen him since then?" asked Frank, rather coldly, not wholly liking her last words.

"Seen him! I, sir? I should as soon think of seeing our emperor as of seeing him; but I just like to make believe that I can fall down at his feet and worship him." And she folded her hands and half moved as if to kneel, with a pretty little gesture like one engaged in adoration.

"If you had told father, he would have helped you."

"You don't understand, sir; we don't want to be helped. Only when I can know enough and can get a good dress, then I want to tell him how his goodness and yours have made me want to get out of all this wrong way of looking at things, and to be free from envy and hatred of others."

"Father has wanted to find you."

"Has he, sir? I am so glad he did not forget us. Please do not tell him where we are; it is not fit for him to come here, nor for you, sir."

"Never mind me," said Frank, who was more touched by this devotion to his father than he dared to own. "You must let me come very often."

"Won't you have a cup of tea, now, sir?" asked Mrs. Krumm.

"It is just what I want," replied Frank, as light-hearted as a boy, and he drew his chair up to the table and insisted on Freia's sitting down by him. He drank three cups of tea, and would have taken another if there had been any more water in the kettle. Freia was quiet. Her mother's meekness lessened as she grew accustomed to her company.

"Drop in and have another cup, soon, won't you, sir?" she said as Frank rose.

"Don't, mother," whispered Freia.

"Why not?" asked Frank, who had heard her words. "I shall come and bring father."

CHAPTER XXI.

APPROPRIATION.

On Miss Aften's return to farmer Drew's, she stayed there quietly, save as her days were broken by frequent visits from some one at Campobello. Often came Mrs. Stanton; still oftener Brooks, who was a favorite with

the farmer's children, and who found that in amusing them he made progress in Miss Aften's friendly regard and apparent need of him. One of the children, who called the farmer uncle, puzzled him by an intangible resemblance to something or somebody.

The child was very fond of paddling, but had been forbidden to take the canoe alone. One afternoon, in her delight at descrying Mr. Brooks's boat, she unfastened the canoe and went to meet him. He was pleased with the child's eagerness to see him; and kept his boat alongside of hers till they reached the shore. There the farmer met them and threatened to shut her up in the potato-cellar if she ever did so again. The child grew very angry, exclaiming,—

"I'll ask God to-night to throw you into the bay, and I'll tell Him to get up a big storm and toss you about till you get drowned."

She stamped her foot at him, and her nostrils trembled like a rabbit's, with a quick short motion. Ned heard her with somewhat of the admiration a spectator feels for an actor's excitement. As he saw this peculiar trick of the nose, he started forward, saying to himself, "It is his very way when angry;" and then he traced the resemblance, unnoticed before, in mouth and eyes. He turned to find Miss Aften coming towards them, and colored that he should have recognized the similarity at that moment. She blushed because she saw that at last he had noticed what she had long feared he might detect. Why should she be keeping Chatham's secret, thought Ned. He had given her his trust weeks since, and now as a gentleman he could not ask her. Honor forbade him to even surmise about it, thus marking the

growth of his regard for her, though it was difficult for him not to wonder in what way Miss Aften had come as saviour to the little one.

Very often Brooks brought Mrs. Stanton with him. Then the ladies would dismiss him while they talked together, or he would be allowed to go sketching with them. He guided them both, always finding more fault with Ruth than with Mrs. Stanton, as it gave him coveted opportunities for correction of her mistakes.

Mrs. Stanton had never again betrayed herself to Miss Aften, and Ruth had that perfect tact in friendship which ignores any past exhibition of another's emotion. The two women read together because they cared for what they read, and not as storing provender for future use or as a transient occupation.

Mr. Stanton never joined these friendly picnics, partly because he preferred billiards, chiefly because there was no way in which, through them, he could serve another. Unless he could help a woman, the woman lost to him much of her charm. He had tried to help his wife. Whose fault was it that he had not succeeded? or, rather, to whose inability should his want of success be charged? or, again, had he failed? He never had been able to decide. He disliked all kinds of meandering introspection or futilities of speculation. He enjoyed facts, witticisms, and French novels, because of their plots. He was never happier than when rendering aid actively to any one who needed it. His days were often filled with ready service, which never passed into chronicles or diary or speech. Some one once said of him, "Mr. Stanton is always ready to help women." He objected, as it was not the

sex in itself for which he specially cared. He knew its foibles and inequalities too well to wish to hasten, by homage rendered to woman as woman, nature's slow methods of maturing feminine strength, until the sex should be full complement of manhood's reserve. It was the individual woman for whom he labored and to whom he gave sympathy and assistance, as part of his belief in the propelling power of individual initiative rather than in organized provisions for employment and aid through State socialism.

He had dreamed of a marriage in which "an awe would always have enfolded his love" for his wife, and in which her soul would have been to him "an upper land," where life's mysteries wove themselves into sunlight, into which he would "climb and listen and watch" till all her sweetness girded his strength. When reality showed him that he needed self-control and self-denial, exclusion of his own hopes and ideas, and inclusion of his wife's sensitive vagaries, ardent aspirations, and fitful demonstrations of affection, he took no revenge in caring for some one else. Surrounding her with every comfort; seeking vent for his chivalrous enthusiasm in deeds of personal daring, when rare occasion offered; in accepting trusts for lonely women, whose small incomes made other men decline the care of their little properties; in giving surprises of pleasure to homeless children; and in devotion to his dogs and horses, there had yet grown up between himself and his wife a misty difference which made each lonely but not antagonistic. Miss Aften's visit had wrought a change in them both, which they did not as yet attribute directly to her. Still each had been more than once confused

at catching the old love-light in each other's eyes: that silent welcome, that benediction of love, the very altar-fire of married life.

Mr. Stanton was really beginning to wish that he could see more of his wife, and smiled grimly at his little jealousy of her frequent visits to Ruth, though each time she returned he found her less brilliant and more serene; more possibly capable of nestling down into his love, if he had it yet to give.

To Brooks the inner experience of the summer had been eventful. As an accredited misanthrope, it outwardly had been a commonplace season. As the golden-rod began to bloom, predicting winter quarters and bachelor solitude, he counted the days left him before Miss Aften departed. He had never dared to question Mrs. Stanton concerning her, lest he should show too conclusively how his movements depended upon hers. A curious mingling of both honor and timidity had made him refrain from asking Ruth about her plans, which he constantly hoped she might freely reveal to him. He knew vaguely that she was soon going to Boston and then somewhere else. To-day, in the warm early autumn air, he was impatient at his imposed self-restraint, and determined to break through it. His impetuous rowing brought him quickly to the farmer's. He found her out-doors and alone; occasion was propitious.

"How beautiful you are!" he could not help saying as he sat down by her side. "Like the violet pansies you love so dearly."

"I wear their color because it was my father's favorite hue, and to-day is another of his heavenly birth-days."

"You look as if you saw him."

"Oh, no, but his memory is so ever-present that I can wait till I do see him."

"Are you never lonely?"

"Yes; I often wish I had a brother or sister."

"Is that all the nearness in affection for which you care?"

"That would be very much to me, though often I am glad in not having that very tribute of personal affection to render, though it must be sweet to have a human friend who could know all I want to say."

"Miss Aften, Ruth, surely you know that it is but for you to choose."

"I have chosen work rather than friends, though only through friendship can I do my work."

"How can I tell you what I mean? You make it harder each time I see you. To another woman I could say, 'Come to me, share my home; but to you,—you are home and shelter in yourself; just to be near you rests me. I can only beseech you that you will shelter me with your steady convictions, that you will make me your man of all work." And he smiled sadly.

"Stop, Mr. Brooks." And she put her hand on his knee.

He clasped it eagerly in his; it rested there so calmly that he felt he was blessed, but was not needed by her. She trembled, and her color came as it might have done in some other girl, and he took courage.

"Ruth, surely you know what I mean. I have tried to put it into words to myself. I can't. I only know I need you unutterably. I do not ask you to come to me, but to let me come to you. Make me what you

will, use my wealth as you choose, only let me be with you, wherever you go and in all you do."

She started and withdrew her hand. He snatched it back so impetuously that she would have been less woman than she was if she had not divined his meaning. Yet it was impossible to answer as if she had comprehended his wish. The hot blush of shame mounted to her temples at the thought that she might have misunderstood him. But this quick, convulsive grasp of her hand; surely that was passion, and it must not be. No; rather would she give up her maidenhood, by anticipating the meaning of his words to her, than have him lay his manhood before her. He knew the lines of her face too well to feel any of the lover's hope of victory, yet he could not let her go of his own free will. He, bruised, but not ruined by the world, needed her as the wind sighing through the trees sinks gratefully to rest amid the thick green leaves.

"You are not frank with me, Ruth."

"I want to be, and that is what troubles me. I am not quite sure what you mean, and I think that perhaps,—you don't know—that—Mrs. Stanton never told you—that I am going to be——"

"Married to some other man!" And he flung away her hand in bitter scorn.

"No, no; you don't understand. No, never to be married,—to be a minister."

"A minister! you!"

There was no mistaking her agitation. She had risen as he so fiercely dropped her hand, but now she sank down, lest she should fall, and covered her face. It was the sharpest, shortest struggle of her life. That

quick, close possession of her hand, his warm breath, his parted lips, his yearning eyes, had roused within her a thrill, a convulsive something, a longing to put her arms out and fall at his feet, only to be gathered up into his embrace and face the sunlight, which streamed through her closed fingers. Her frame shook; every vein in her body pulsed as if it would burst its confinement; her eyes were blinded, and the world stood still for her. Then came a quiet, out of which rose a spreading peace; the agony and pain died away. The one, deep purpose of her life rose god-like before her. The need of human appropriation faded, the sense of divine absorption grew. Her pulses were quiet, and she was at home again with her tranquil self.

To him the agony was longer; he threw his words at her:

"Married to some other man, I could have hated you. A minister! You had better be my wife than that! You preach to men! You, whom I would have worn so close upon my heart that not even a rain-drop could reach you. You, whose slightest whisper I would have hushed into my own being. You talk to others, and let the world comment upon you! Girl, you know not what you are doing."

He stood before her as he spoke; now he impatiently sat down again. She hardly knew what he had said. She was conscious that he was wounded, grieved. All the womanly in her so longed to console his pain that she forgot everything but her compassion, and drew his hand into her keeping as a mother comforts a sorrowing child. Like a child he yielded to her caress, as she spoke:

"Let me tell you how ever since I was a little girl I have wanted to be that creature, a minister of God to the peoples of his earth; how it has come to me in the miseries of the city, in the pureness of the country; the birds have sung it to me, the stars have shone upon it; books have nurtured it; my father trusted it. You will help me, Ned, brother, comrade mine."

The air grew stiller round them; her sure tones steadied him, yet he did not move.

She placed her fingers upon his hair, and he dreamt of angel wings; he heard again his mother's prayer for his boyhood,—"Lord, keep my boy pure." Reverently he took the caressing hand and raised his weary head.

"I am only a man, Ruth, and you must forgive me. Some other day, perhaps, I'll come again. But tell me one thing truly,—didn't you know I loved you?"

She answered slowly, her truth as evident as her hesitation: "I did not think of it at first; then I had a strange feeling of not wanting you to know that I was to be a minister, lest you would not approve; but I grew ashamed of that self-consciousness, and asked Mrs. Stanton to tell you. I thought you knew long ago, and that, knowing it, you did not like it and could not speak of it to me, and that therefore you could not, would not, love me."

As she looked in his face so eagerly, he would have been less than man if he had not thought that she had almost cared for him. He could not divest himself sufficiently of his great love for her to realize that, having chosen her life-work, any deviation from it was not possible to her.

"Have you never loved any one?"

"Never as you mean. My ministry is no offering of dead affection or of a stunted life. It is the joyous outpouring of myself into the heart of the universe."

"Some time hence, Ruth, if I want to, may I come again and ask this question?"

"You will not want to."

"I do not know. If I do, may I?"

"Come to me when you can, as co-worker and comrade."

"Shall you ever marry?"

"Never. I do not like the appropriating of marriage; its joys and gifts are dear, but you know in the old Indian legends I was always sorry for the bride by capture."

He gazed upon her searchingly, as if to read whether the gathering sadness in her face were for him or herself. He found no personal answer written there, in the holy purpose which shone through the grief, and he turned and left her. Never before had he rowed so fast. He wanted to escape from her and from himself. He tied his boat and hurried up the pier to upbraid Mrs. Stanton with her silence, but as he reached the cliff he looked back. There was the round perfect sun, just touching the tops of the distant trees, and sending its circled reflection to the waters at their feet. The golden image leaped across to Treat's Island and mirrored itself in the weir. It caught itself up and swept out into the middle of the bay, irradiating the currents which lay upon the waters like dark lines of foliage girded by sea-weed hedge. The sunset clouds tinged each other; mist and water, sky and earth, were all inextricably blended into unison of working glory,

which sank into his heart. He stood still. His anger melted into sorrow. Surely whatever Ruth did was right. His sorrow dawned into hope. Surely his life must grow into harmony with hers forever, if not in the exclusive possession of human marriage, then in the grander service of human ministry to universal need.

"Stanton," said Brooks that evening, as the two men were alone, smoking, "Did you know Miss Aften was to be a minister?"

"Yes; my wife told me."

"Why didn't she tell me?"

"I believe Miss Aften did not want it known at first, but some weeks ago she asked my wife to tell you. Didn't she?"

"No."

"Why, Brooks, old fellow, would it have made any difference?" asked Stanton, brusquely, noticing for the first time his friend's appearance. "I told Mrs. Stanton she ought to tell you, but she seemed particularly anxious you should not know."

"I take it for granted, Stanton," said Brooks, slowly, reluctantly, as if impelled to speak, we are both rather hazy about creeds, and go to church, when we do go, as being the correct thing to do. But this summer, into that prayer of perfect English for the Queen, I have read Ruth's name. 'Endue her plenteously with heavenly gifts.' You know it."

"She has too many of them; that is the trouble."

"I can't joke about it. It is odd I don't feel as if she had refused me, only that she has not got any use for me."

"Has it gone as far as that? Mrs. Stanton always

supposed she would come round when it came to the point."

"Mrs. Stanton does not know her. Why, Stanton, I thought I loved her tremendously. I never shall love any other woman. I can't give her up. She 'll have to take me for vestryman."

"If she weren't a minister, Ned, it would be different, but for a man to marry a lady minister is like a woman marrying another woman,—abnormal kind of friendship."

"If I could contrive to go off every Sunday."

"You couldn't. She and her sermon would be in the morning's paper."

"Hang it, Stanton, it is all over with me."

"Did you really love her so very much?"

"Did? Why do you put it in the past tense, as if she were dead? Do I love her? I'd bear her in my arms up into heaven or down into hell. I'd hold her close through the earth. I'd feed upon her grace. I'd enshrine her eyes in mine and hide her mouth with my breath, and when she'd let me I'd kiss her. I'd wait for it more patiently than any dog ever waited for a crumb from his master's table." He stopped short in his impetuous speech. "Look here, you need not say anything of this to your wife. Just tell her the bare fact; it is more honorable, especially as she has not succeeded in her plans for us. I shall go away tomorrow."

"Don't; stay and live it down."

"I can't do that here; perhaps I can't anywhere."

"Well, come back whenever you will. Our home must be yours, now more than ever."

CHAPTER XXII.

FELLOWSHIP.

RUTH suffered almost as much as Ned. Was her pain to soon pass away? Was he to bear his as long as he lived? Perhaps the time might come to him when he would look back upon that hour with her as his entrance into the Holy of Holies. His perception that she might have loved him if she had known him earlier was his shadowy companion, filling him with an exquisite, sad delight.

Ruth had been so sure that Mrs. Stanton had told him of her purpose, which to her mind was an impregnable barrier to marriage, that she had received his increasing friendship with gladness. And now she had given great pain to one whom she might easily have loved if it had been possible for her to substitute the personal appropriation of marriage for the largess which she stood ready to bestow upon human friendship. It was not because she was devoid of the imagination which could have pictured to her the joys of married life, but because she had so wrought herself into the forces of nature; had so appropriated to herself, as illustration, their unspoken language; was so overshadowed by the sense of divine nearness; had so heard the mystic Ought, calling her to voice its eternal sway over every-day duties, till tree and wave, human deed and thought, broke into one grand choral of gratitude to Him from Whom all life floweth, and to Whom

it returneth, that she had never thought of leading a dual existence and pulling the white-weed's petals until they told whether or not she loved him or he loved her.

She, moreover, was conscious that Brooks's logical and scientific mind had taught her the illusion in analogy, despite its truth, and was training her to see that every religious teacher philosophizes according to his own data, conditioned by his own experience, which he discounts up to a certain point. His full and ready knowledge, his keen wit, his distant politeness to others, and his evident gladness in her society had grafted themselves into her existence, and though she knew by the subtlety of sympathy that her faith and his conception of what constituted reason could never coincide, she trusted that their mutual need of each other would keep them in the ranks of comradeship.

The same feeling which led Ned to leave the island prompted her to hasten her departure from the farmer's, to write her good-by to the Stantons, and to go to Boston by rail. Brooks went by steamer, or they might have met sooner than either wished.

Ruth believed in the divine right of expediency. Therefore she had decided to do that which in itself seemed to savor of church authority, and was on that account repugnant to her. She was too thoroughly a woman not to seek protection when it involved no compromise, and too little of a reformer to care for the isolation of prominence. She recognized also the thrill of association which arises from co-working, the power that lies even in a loose form of organization, and the use of kindly recommendation. On business principles

and in her position as a woman she saw the co-ordinated strength she could gain if connected with some visible headship. It seemed to her all the more desirable because she had not been born and bred in the faith of Channing and Gannett. Her parents had been Baptists, though of the milder sort. She herself had never been specifically connected with any church. Her personal experience and her studies had led her to prefer Unitarianism to any other statement of faith, yet she separated in her mind its eternal verities from its dogmatic beliefs. Having no recognized ancestry to vouch for her, she wanted the protection which, lacking that, could come to her through the acceptance of herself by an acknowledged body of persons. Many churches would have taken her without any general official recommendation as preacher, and in due course of time would have called the neighboring churches together and ordained her, for Congregational polity has increasingly manifested itself in far more local independence than was ever enjoyed in the old days of a council summoned to examine each man before he was ordained. Now ordination is the gift of a special church or of a body of churches.

Therefore she had determined to present herself before the Committee on Fellowship of the National Council and ask it to recommend her to the Unitarian body. However much she would have preferred the independence of going to some small parish and, accepted by it, of doing its work, she knew that a more organic conception of the interdependence of mutual relations demanded that she and any possible parish she might have should join the consolidating

lines of human progress, hoping that the little sentinel tents on the religious horizon would in time become absorbed into one camp, with no other passwords than truth and love.

The Committee on Fellowship had no authority. It could give little more than an introduction into an untried circle of friends. Her note to the chairman, asking permission to lay her case before them, was answered by making an appointment for her to meet them at the house of the Rev. Dr. Tarbell. When she arrived, at the time agreed upon, she was shown into the library, which bespoke the profession of its occupant by the melancholy and scriptural engravings of Perugino's "Entombment," Rubens's "Descent from the Cross," a Magdalen, the "Expulsion of Adam and Eve," and the "Judgment of Solomon." The books were of a theological cast, and sombre in binding. The equipments of the writing-table were plain. There was a general air of neat order rather than of literary luxuriousness.

Dr. Tarbell was writing as she entered, and welcomed her with the fatherly manner peculiar to clergymen, which would be considered as familiarity in a middle-aged lawyer. The two younger ministers soon came in, one tall, slight, agile, an easy gentleman in all his bearing; the other less self-possessed, looking like the anxious father of a young family and the scape-goat of his parish committee. Ruth thought of the Inquisition, and wished she could talk only to the gentlemanly minister. Dr. Tarbell cordially began the catechism of her fitness and personal history.

"So, Miss Aften, you want to enter the ministry?"

The girl bowed.

"Tell us about your preparation for it. The fact is, that though we have heard of your few months' preaching in Dakota, we really do not know much about it."

"I went there at the request of a friend, after I had finished at Ann Arbor. Then I came east and attended lectures at the Annex."

"Your subjects, please, miss," said Dr. Tarbell, who was not satisfied with the vagueness of her reply.

"I studied Ecclesiastical History under Professor Emerton, English Literature under Professor Wendell, Ethics under Dr. Royce, and Political Economy under Professor Taussig."

"You had graduated from Meadville previously?"

"No, sir."

"You have not been to any theological school?"

"No, sir."

"You have brought us letters from your parish in Dakota?"

"No, sir. I went simply as substitute for the minister, who was ill, and I came away when he recovered."

"Let Miss Aften tell her story in her own way," said the gentlemanly clergyman, Mr. Howe, whose trained eye detected in her firm and gentle composure the external means for success.

"My trouble is, gentlemen," she answered, "I have so little to tell and so much to hope for. I have always meant to be a minister, and shall be," she added, with an increase of firmness in her voice.

They noticed it, and smiled. She smiled too; the thin ice of formality was broken. The men drew their

chairs nearer and listened, for her smile had shone upon them.

"While my father lived I could not leave him; after his death, I went to college and graduated. From that time I have chosen those studies which would help me most, for I wanted to know of the causes which produce to-day's unrest, and of the sureness which lurks in science, history, and human consciousness, in order to combat it."

"Why not have gone through the regular course of a divinity school?"

"For three reasons: only one of the schools give a degree identical with that given to a man, and personal reasons prevented me from going to that one; the woman's ministry is virtually disallowed when a woman does not receive the same premium for her study as does a man. Secondly, to graduate at a theological school whose views I cannot spread is as ungrateful as to go to the Massachusetts Medical School and then practise homœopathy. Thirdly, because I do not care for most of the courses taught in any divinity school, and think that the woman's success as a minister must be more dependent upon her sense of God in human history than in tracing Him through exegesis and the formal style of sermon-writing."

"You are frank, Miss Aften," said one of the examiners.

"And I mean to be humble," she returned. "I may be mistaken, I cannot yet tell; I had to work in the way which was to me the only way, so far as I could see."

"Do I understand that you call yourself a Unitarian?" asked Mr. Bryant, the anxious minister.

"That is just my trouble, sir." Again that smile, which made any answer needless. "I cannot call myself by any other name. I am a Unitarian so far as that involves principles, methods. I am, too, in what we humanly call doctrinal belief, but I fear to take the name, lest any name may prevent me from owning my own soul. I want a Unitarian parish to take me on trust."

"Why ally yourself, then, with any denomination?"

"That I and my parish may have the advantages of fellowship. Unitarianism is the best name I know, when it does not imply consummation or finality."

"You are of course acquainted with the history and aims of our faith; how do you forecast its future?"

"Is not denominational zeal something like the narrowness of patriotism? Do we not need to deal more in universals? I dream of a faith above all other faiths, which shall embrace the personal ardor of Methodism, the symbolism of the High with the preaching power of the Low Church, the simplicity of the Baptist, the missionary obedience of the Catholic, and the creedlessness of Unitarianism."

"Are your views sufficiently definite?" inquired the timid man.

"The fatherhood of God is such a definite infinitude, that probably my convictions are elastic compared with that; they certainly are included in that."

"There must still be some special truth to which we cling as anchor," he urged.

"Is not the truth circumscribed by our personal equation? We appropriate different forms and degrees of knowledge according to our present moods; a

truism, I know, but we forget to apply it when differences arise."

"Miss Aften means," said Dr. Tarbell, "that not mere knowledge of the elements of belief, but of proportion between them, carries one into the kingdom of heaven. After all is said, the totality of our beliefs is much alike, the emphasis on special points being differently laid."

"Thank you," returned Ruth; "it is just as we only realize the richness of extension in belief by the intention which some special man gives to it, who is all that man universal is, plus all that makes him, himself specific."

"You are happy in your faith," said Mr. Howe, a little sadly, as if he wished he were still young.

"Happy!" she replied. "If I can have the consecrated right to help people in my own little way to see that God is, and so to be happy, I shall be joyous."

"How will you explain the miseries of life?"

"As due to broken laws. God would be less than God if misfortunes came from aught but man's ignorance and sin. Because He is Himself, He has given us immortality in which to work off our mistakes."

"Have you any fixed theory about preaching?" asked Dr. Tarbell after a few moments' silence.

"Only that I want it to be general as prayer; 'the trysting place of the Spirit' shall be personal."

"You mean you want practical sermons, something in them for the little ones," said the overburdened father, who had never succeeded in interesting children.

"Perhaps you and I mean the same. I don't be-

lieve in preaching down to children. I don't believe in the thou-art-the-man sermons. I want always to choose great subjects, and then spread their radiance over every-day perplexities."

He bowed, troubled, and brought forward his favorite topic, in which he felt himself at home. "Your parish, how will you manage that?"

"Oh, I have so many theories concerning it; my chief duty is my responsibility to increase generous individuality, to make the church a home, the parish a guild. What shall be my intercourse with the men of the parish troubles me more than what I shall do with the women and children."

"Perhaps you will marry," said Dr. Tarbell, kindly.

"If that were possible I should not have come to you to-day. I have taken no vow against it," she continued, seeing his deprecatory gesture, "but if a woman is to give herself to her parish, she must have no closer intimacies to tax her strength or claim her love."

"Will not life be lonely for you?" asked Mr. Howe.

"Lonely, sir, when God is near?"

Mr. Howe bit his lip for very shame that he had doubted her. Ruth, with that tender pity which made her wish to take the sting out of any words of hers, added, "Marriage for those who love is but 'leading the divinest life they know.'"

"Thank you," he returned; "my wife will thank you, too."

"You are chosen of God," said the oldest man, with emotion. "We can but give you a letter saying that in

less plain words. Trust us as co-workers; guide us with your happy face, and faith."

The girl slid from her chair and put her head on his knees. He bent over her, and his lips moved. The eyes of the timid man grew misty, as the memory of his own youthful enthusiasms, his early marriage, his many children, and his decreasing parish came to him. As Ruth rose, Mr. Howe held out his hand to her:

"I welcome you into the privilege of opportunity, the birthright of faith, into the religious life of ethics, into the vision of the infinite Ought and the personality of the Father,—God."

She could not speak. He needed no answer beyond that which he read in the crimson flood of joy which made her face shine as an angel's. Reverently he opened the door for her, and she passed from their sight.

"We ought to have asked her what she thought about Christ," said Mr. Bryant, anxiously.

"She would have told us that she was a Christian both historically and experimentally," replied Mr. Howe, with that faint touch of sarcasm in his voice which clergymen permit themselves when with the fraternity.

"Why, Brother Howe, have you any objection to her being a Christian?"

"Not at all. She ought to be. I was only wishing that the geometrical axiom had also been a Bible text, —the whole is greater than any of its parts."

"There is still one point which I do not quite understand," pleaded the timid man, always faithful, always perplexed. "I don't quite see why she could not have

gone to Meadville in the regular way and saved all this embarrassment; personal reasons, she alleged."

"I can tell you, Brother Bryant," answered Mr. Howe. "I saw Collins here to-day; he knew her in Dakota. He said he never heard a woman preach with such unction and simplicity as she did; that they wanted her to stay, and that when she saw the feeling she had roused, she came away, for she had gone as substitute for some one else, and she was not going to injure his chances. As to Meadville, she did not go there because just as she was going to apply for admission she found a young man had entered the school who was in love with her; at least that was the story, and now I have seen her I have no doubt of its truth."

"Miss Aften, gentlemen," said Dr. Tarbell, "gave me these letters with hesitation before you came in; not exactly credentials; we must look them over for form's sake, at least." And he proceeded to read them aloud.

"I am satisfied, Dr. Tarbell," said Mr. Howe, when the Doctor had finished. "I was content before you had begun."

"So am I."

"We must not forget," observed Mr. Bryant, "that the eyes of the denomination are upon us, and that we must conduct our examinations faithfully. I move that while we do not recommend her to the Unitarian body as thoroughly equipped for divine service, we do yet so express our sense of her capacity that some village parish may be induced to try her."

"I move that we do no such thing," said Mr. Howe.

"First, we have no authority whatever; she can go where she will; neither have we doctrinal tests; and as for what she has already done, why those letters are proof enough that we have been talking with an anointed of the Lord. I move, Dr. Tarbell, that we send our usual notice to the *Christian Register*, saying she has appeared before us, and that we most earnestly commend her. If ever she should exchange with us, I venture our parishes will be glad enough to hear her."

"My people are not prepared to hear a woman," remarked the previous speaker.

"Nor are mine, but that is no reason why they should not. The women are bound to enter the ministry, and when we see one who is not going to have husband and housekeeping tagging after her, we had better let her do all she can to save us."

"Surely you wouldn't want to have a minister for a wife."

"Good heaven! no more than I should want to marry my mother; but I know a single-hearted, large-minded woman when I see her, and Miss Aften is that."

CHAPTER XXIII.

OPPOSITION.

MRS. STANTON had moved to town. The confusion of unpacking over, she had noticed an increasing unwillingness in Frank to consider her plans for making

her house more beautiful. "I don't see anything the matter," was his constant objection whenever she suggested changes.

He went without dessert at dinner, wore old clothes, came home at night tired with his steady search after the cause of misery. Freia herself had disappointed him. He had expected to find her weary with the seething discontent of the working-classes, crushed under the heel of capital, clamorous for eight hours as a day's labor, in order that the proletariat might take a larger share in moulding the national life; whereas she considered herself and her father to blame for their own misfortunes, and relied upon gradual improvement in the laws, upon increasing refinement and enlightenment of feeling, and upon the spontaneous unfolding of noble individualities to work out a social order. Liberty and sympathy were her antidotes for force or special legislation, as applied to classes of people.

At least, Frank thus formulated her opinions after their frequent talks, in which he represented the paternal kindliness of State Socialism.

"Such government would be just like having a husband take care of one, instead of earning one's own living," said Freia, one evening.

"Well, don't you want to be married?" he asked, with a boy's brusqueness.

"Never, just to be taken care of. When I marry, it will be because I want to give him all the richness of my love, to be his servant, his cook, his grateful pupil, his dearest friend, his beloved."

"Freia, my dear, don't your head ache?" asked her

mother, not at all comprehending what her reserved daughter had said, but seeing her burning cheeks and Frank Stanton's agitation.

"Yes, it does; it seems as if it would burst."

"It is too bad to keep you up," said Frank, and left the room.

"He'll never come again," exclaimed Freia, dashing her hand across her eyes. "I don't want him to after —after my talking so; he'll despise me."

"You'd better have talked like that a year ago, to Jack," remarked Mrs. Krumm.

She looked at her mother in amazement, and thinking to herself, "It's one comfort, mother don't understand," went to bed and cried herself to sleep, like a child with a passionate heart, a self-accusing spirit, and a rare intelligence.

Freia had been brought up in the midst of strikes and excesses. Owing to their reaction on herself, she was evolving an individual code of remedies. Perhaps because of her dread of meeting Frank, she met Mr. Chatham's "good-evening," the next day, with more friendliness than she had ever shown him. He had begun to suspect that she was interested in some one else than himself, and that it might be the man who had taken her from the hall, for she persistently refused to talk of that event.

"Have you found out yet who was your rescuer the other night?" he asked.

"If I have, I shan't tell you."

"Come, now, that isn't fair;" and he tried to draw her hand through his arm.

All her Northern savagery aroused, she dealt him a

vigorous blow, which sent him reeling on the pavement. Before he could pick himself up, she had vanished. A solitary policeman had seen the encounter, and favored Freia's escape by keeping Chatham on the ground till a crowd of men and boys had collected, and then he let him go. "If she won't marry me, she has no idea of going along with him," reasoned Jack, for it was he who had been Freia's guardsman.

Chatham's vanity led him to be more mortified than indignant. He had been struck by a woman; there was a barbarism in that which he relished. He had also got very muddy, and been laughed at by small boys, two causes sufficient to destroy his self-respect for the time being. He took the by-ways homeward, lest he should be seen in his now disreputable attire, and on the way met Wolfgang appearing more unsavory than usual. He tried to avoid even him, but the German's hungry sensibilities discerned him.

"I'm uncommon hard up, Mr. Chatham. I got up a lot of mottoes for the Assembly, and calculated it would pay me, but it hasn't."

"I don't care a hang whether they do or not."

"Oh, come, now, yes you do. 'No Boss owns Us.' 'Free Men obey no Laws.' 'The Church is Chaos.' Pretty fine mottoes, eh?"

Chatham tried to get away from him.

"Not so fast, young man; maybe I have scented your game."

"You've been long enough about it."

"Well, you see, it may come right into the family, and on principle I'm opposed to capital, but hain't no objection when it's a son-in-law."

"Stop your fooling, and tell me what you mean. I'm in a hurry."

"'Tain't particularly pleasant to be seen walking with me, eh! I'll come again some other time; 'twill keep."

"Tell me now, and done with it."

"Oh, 'tain't much; you remember our bargain?"

"Yes."

"Well, as I was saying, 'tain't much, only I shan't be surprised if the young gentleman you were asking about was my son-in-law."

"Frank Stanton? he isn't any relation of yours!"

"He ain't now, but ther' ain't anything to hinder it. 'Tain't in me to offer objections if I could get a good berth; he'd have to fork out well."

"Stop your damned fooling, and be square."

"Mind you, I don't know nothing, but he's been prowling round our house, off and on, for a couple of weeks; he's the same chicken you wanted to catch on to."

"What does he want?"

"That's what sticks me. Freia don't say nothing, and wife, she only says as how she wished he'd marry Freia, but 't warn't likely."

"Do you know anything more?"

"I hain't interviewed him myself, but it ain't natural for capital not to invest in something."

"All right, Wolfgang; keep a sharp eye, and let me know what goes on. This'll buy you tobacco."

The old man took the bill in his greasy fingers, examined it carefully, and chuckled like one demented. "I'm uncommon low to-night," he again repeated, and

turned to thank Chatham for the bribe, but he had gone.

Chatham's step grew light. He forgot about the mud on his clothes, and went straight to Mrs. Stanton's door to learn if she knew anything about Frank and Freia, and, in accordance with what she knew, to insinuate far more than he knew himself. As he stood in the brilliantly-lighted marble vestibule of Hotel Chester, his eyes fell on his blackened trousers, his grayish boots, and battered hat; he glanced at his shirt, and that was bespattered. Cursing his ill luck, which would make even a janitor turn him away, unless he could get into the streets before his ring at the inner door was answered, he stumbled against Frank, who was coming in, and passed him without speaking, hoping the young fellow would not recognize him; nor did he.

It was just the dinner-hour as Frank entered. The meal was very simple, in deference to his philanthropic tastes or notions. He was preoccupied, and gave wrong answers to his mother's questions. She maintained her grand manner as long as their butler was in the room, for Mr. Stanton had insisted on retaining his services, even against Frank's conscience. When he left, she relapsed into silence. Frank secretly wished the man would return, his presence being a visible reason for his want of frankness. He felt like an entrapped criminal; he had a confession to make of guilt or suffering, which he knew his mother could not actualize by any experience of her own.

Mrs. Stanton had urged her son to go to Europe, as escape from the friction of maternal love. When he rejected her desire, telling her he had work to do at

home, she hoped it was work as essayist or poet. When she asked him about the labor papers and pamphlets with which his tables were filled, he took a box at the post-office and stayed in his father's office down-town. Once she had insisted on his going with her to hear the "Götterdammerung;" the agony of the music wrought itself into drops of perspiration on his forehead. She brought him poems and pictures for his comment; he treated her and them with courteous politeness, and laid them aside. He had grown far off from her, and she knew it; all the more because through her intercourse with Ruth the folds of complexity in which she was wrapped were loosening.

"My boy, my boy," was the burden of her refrain. Anxiety, love, or disappointment, which was it that attuned the words to her heart-beats? To her the one most conscious fact of the universe was her boy, and he was slipping from her. Never had she taken more care not to offend his eye by any misplaced shading of dress or manner. If it did occur to her that he would have liked to have seen her with cap, apron, and broom, it would have been impossible for her to have effected that transformation. And so she sat still on the sofa in the library, dinner ended.

"Mamma!" said Frank.

She looked up with such sudden pleasure at the gentler tone in his voice that her son turned aside; it is so disagreeable to be loved more than one loves in return.

"You remember Wolfgang and his daughter?"

"That dreadful German and his yellow-haired girl? What of them?"

"I have seen a good deal of her lately."

"You! Why?"

"Because she is oppressed, poor; because I think I love her."

He had spoken with his head downcast, as if to avoid meeting his mother's gaze, but the quietness of the room compelled him to look up.

"Mother!" he exclaimed, as he saw her white, terrified face. "Mamma, forgive me. I do not love her as I do you. I shall only love you the more because of loving her."

Mrs. Stanton's fingers caught at each other convulsively.

"She has had a hard life, mamma, and needs your care. Won't you take her, for my sake?"

He seated himself on the cushion at his mother's feet, and tried to take her hands; they were clinched. She drew them up and put them across her bosom, as if to check the life-blood, which now, avenging itself for the restraint put upon it, rushed over her face and neck. Still no answer. She motioned him away. He tried to go; the sight of her suffering smote him. His mother, who until a year ago had been his closest friend, though the intimacy between them had been on the wane far longer than that; his mother, who had ever waited for his smile and had rested content in his manliness whenever he had shown it, he had smitten her cruelly, through the common law of common life,—the out-growing of boyhood's confines and the desire to make a home of his own.

"I cannot leave you thus, mamma mine."

"Does your father know?"

"I have come to you first."

That little word; it was soothing.

"Sit down here and tell me, Frank;" and she pointed him to the footstool. "Tell me all."

"You remember that shipwreck, mamma, when father and I stayed with the steerage passengers? Ever since then I have longed to help in the world, so there should be no more steerage people. There was one girl I saved, who has haunted me. I dreamt of her as an endless chain. I knew nothing of her till last spring, when I saw her driven down-stairs, at Brady's, as she asked for work. Even then I did not know it was she. I hunted all summer for her. Some time ago I went, through Chatham's persuasion, to a labor Assembly. Wolfgang was speaking. I did not know he was her father, neither did I really know her. Suddenly she tried to stop him, but the mob came and got hold of both her and him. I seized her and carried her away through the crowd. Since then I have been to see her often. She works as table-girl at the Women's Union."

"Have you spoken to her—of your—wish?"

"Do you mean of marriage? No, never."

"Does she love you?"

"I do not think she does now, but she could love, so that all my life would be rich in joy."

"Is she a lady?"

Frank winced, but remembered to be patient. What was old to him was new to her.

"No, not in the society sense; but she is beautiful, earnest, loving. You would never be ashamed of her, mamma."

"You would grow very tired of her, Frank."

"I want to take her away from the wretchedness of her life. It would be doing all I could, simply as an individual, to make some other individual happy."

"She would soon find out then that you married her from pity, as a debt of justice. You love her as a cause, not as a woman."

"I care for the cause by loving her. I want to marry her now, before I love her only for herself."

"Promise me that you will say nothing to her till the spring."

"I cannot. I love her too much already for that."

She saw he was in earnest. Still she urged, "It does no harm to wait."

"I can make no promises; she may need me."

Mrs. Stanton did not reply. Twenty-five years she had been absorbed in her son. Several days, at most a few weeks, had enthralled him to an unknown girl. She knew him too well to doubt but that his chivalric devotion would grow into a close, fervent, personal affection; and, in a way, unacknowledged even to herself, she was proud of his knighthood, while she deprecated the challenge he had given himself. She took refuge, as many another wife has done, in bidding Frank ask his father what he thought. She was glad to be alone, freed of her boy, until she could regulate her emotions first, her conduct secondly. Life had grown darker than she had ever felt it. She was a mother robbed of her son, for never could she share him with the German girl.

The son knocked at his father's private room, and

was welcomed by a frankness which showed no suspicion of his boy's errand.

"It was good to see you with your mother as in the old times. I passed by the door, but would not go in on purpose. She gets a little lonely now, as we have both grown older."

"I am afraid that what I said made her feel lonelier."

"How so?"

"I told her I wanted to marry Freia, Wolfgang's daughter."

"And she said you couldn't; that ends it," said Mr. Stanton, quickly.

"No, sir, it does not end it. I shall marry her. You helped to save her in the shipwreck. You heard her that night at the Assembly. You saved her again at Brady's. You——"

"How do you know all this?" interrupted his father, sternly.

"I saw you there, and she told me."

"Was it you who rescued her?"

"Yes."

"What else did she say?"

"That she wished she could serve you all the rest of her life."

"How did you know so much about her?"

Then Frank told his father what he had already said to his mother. Mr. Stanton listened, annoyed and perplexed. Until Frank told him, he had had no idea that it was Wolfgang's wife and daughter whom he and his son had saved from death by drowning. There was a net-work of circumstances in it which annoyed him.

It was like a fate, necessitating the marriage of Frank and Freia. However, on no condition could he consent to it. The difficulty of preventing it he understood better than his wife, for he had seen the girl and felt the effect of her eloquent manner and strange beauty. He did not deem it expedient to tell his son that since that day in his office he had done silent penance for a moment's forgetfulness. When Freia fell she fainted, and to his own great surprise he had kissed her forehead before she awoke.

If Frank were grieved with his mother's pain, he was indignant at his father's long silence and reserved manner. Why should not his parents care for her for whom he cared? He expected them to adjust themselves at once to his new feelings and demands. Lovers have always lacked that modicum of imagination which might enable them to realize the parent's sudden, forced abdication of being first claimant to a child's affection. Frank could wait no longer, and, in fretful, impetuous tone, asked,—

"Can I take your silence for an unwilling consent?"

Mr. Stanton started. Had he forgotten his son was there?

"No, Frank. I shall never consent to your marrying Wolfgang's daughter. He represents the very worst element in all this labor movement, and I can't become sponsor to it by any crazy act of yours."

"Is that what I shall tell my mother?" said the boy, angry at what he considered his father's brutal treatment of him.

"Did she send you to me?"

"Not exactly."

"Whatever she may say, understand that I shall never consent to your having anything to do with Miss Krumm as long as her father lives."

"I can wait," replied the son, ignoring his previous opinion, expressed to his mother.

CHAPTER XXIV.

AN ORPHAN.

Mr. and Mrs. Stanton scarcely spoke to each other of Frank in this early autumn of their renewed love; each was hurt with the other's want of confidence. Mrs. Stanton tried to delude herself with the probability of Frank's recognizing the fatuity of his chivalrous purpose. Mr. Stanton measured more accurately the depth of his son's feeling, and wished that his boy had not an income of his own, which prevented him from being dependent on his father for support. At times Mrs. Stanton fancied that if Frank were to marry, this way of doing it might keep him more closely attached to her; though she loved him too truly to tolerate the thought of his suffering, if the Freia of his enthusiasm should not endure the disciplinary monotony of married life.

Margaret Stanton was never hopeless before catastrophes. The shock of last night's revelation she locked in the torture-chamber of her memory, and proceeded to marshal her forces of resistance. Knowledge of the

foe with whom she had to deal was her first requisite. As she sipped her morning coffee, she wished that her husband would put down the newspaper and talk. As he read, he exclaimed,—

"Did you know Miss Aften was going to Mendham?"

"Accepted a call, you mean; that is the technical term."

"A woman has no business to have anything technical about her. It is bad enough to get into the society items, as you do, but it is sacrilegious to be spoken of as a charming minister."

"Would you not like to have her make us a little visit before she goes?"

"Very much. I'm a better man when she is around. I think of her as of moonlight."

"You did not think so when you first saw her."

"No; that was before I knew she was a minister. That changes her relations to the world and to me. She becomes semi-detached, a kind of risen ghost, a sort of transubstantiation miracle, and I do not go to church often."

"I never wanted to until I knew her."

"She is so different from Freia."

Mrs. Stanton refilled her cup, that by her apparent unconcern her husband might become talkative.

"Freia is full of warm, human color," he continued; "she could lead an army or nurse a hospital; she is a superb creature. I don't wonder Frank wants to marry her."

"Will he do it?"

"Never, with my consent, while her father lives."

"Poor Frank!"

"Why, do you want him to marry her?"

"No, but I want him to be happy, even if others are unhappy."

"Mr. Chatham!" announced the butler.

"I wish he were not in the habit of coming here so often," observed Mrs. Stanton.

"It is a compliment to you. No other woman could have held him in respectful leash so long," replied her husband. "Bring him in here," he continued, addressing the man.

"We were just speaking of a call which, I see by the paper, Miss Aften has received," remarked Mr. Stanton, after the usual greetings had been exchanged.

Mrs. Stanton made signs to her husband, which he did not understand, and passed her the sugar and cream.

"Miss Aften is not the woman whom I should care to see in such a position, requiring perspicuity of talent and finesse."

"She is our dearest friend," observed Mr. Stanton, impressively, suddenly recollecting what his wife's signs must have meant.

Chatham took his cue and spoke of the labor movement in relation to the pulpit, apropos, in his mind, to his proposed inuendo concerning Frank and Freia.

"By the way, Stanton, they say your boy is filled with these labor notions."

"So am I."

"Oh, more than in that impersonal manner of yours. They say he goes in for the free-love part of it, and has lost his heart to the priestess of the movement, one Freia, a table-girl in a down-town restaurant."

"You mean Wolfgang Krumm's daughter?"

"I believe that is her name."

"Oh, she is a friend too; we are very much interested in her, and Frank is losing many of his quixotic notions by coming in contact with her. It is much better to know working-people through themselves than by the retail gossip of gentlemen's clubs. Don't you think so?"

Before Chatham could reply further than by bowing, Mrs. Stanton added, in as calm a voice as her husband's, "She is very different from Miss Aften; they both are noble types of the new kind of womanhood."

An imperceptible smile strayed over the faces of husband and wife. She had followed his lead, and Chatham had played his trump card in vain. He soon departed, determined to produce a knave of hearts, even if his suit were not followed.

"Supposing, my dear, that you send for Miss Aften to come to us at once," suggested Mr. Stanton.

"Perhaps she could put us in the way of knowing Freia through her, rather than by compromising ourselves, just at present, in hunting her up."

"You are more to me than either of those two women," said Stanton, drawing his wife towards him, with a happy freedom which neither he nor she even yet realized was due to Ruth's having dwelt among them.

"I am so glad," replied his wife simply.

To Ruth also had come the rumor set in motion by Chatham. She hastened to her friends before she went to her new home among the hills, where she hoped, after a few months' stay, the local conference might ordain her in some simple fashion. Her vocation had come to her in the still watches of the night and the openness of the

noon-day sun, yet she did not want her ministry trammelled by lack of consecrated form. The heart moves away from symbolism slowly, though the mind may long ago have accepted its effeteness. Ruth was one of those who, by patience with to-day's formula, hoped to transform it without its rebound into disregard of all belief, or without bringing upon those who reject it a mountain-top loneliness of soul, even if they become beacon-lights to those below.

Ruth now forgot her own interests in her sympathy with the Stantons. She felt the bitterness of the mother's pain, the disappointment of the father's future plans for his son.

"I wish you could find out about the girl," begged Mrs. Stanton. "You knew her long ago."

"Can't you do a little private, detective work?" added Mr. Stanton. "Of course the marriage is impossible, but at the same time we might help her."

"Let me ask Frank to take me to see her, as a minister, if you will," said Ruth, smilingly.

That she could speak thus about herself showed she was beginning to feel at ease in the announcement of her profession. Mr. Stanton knew that in no other way than a direct one could the simplicity of her integrity succeed. So they left it to her spirit to divine its own methods.

Frank had not seen Freia for several days. It seemed to him dishonorable to seek her unknown to his parents, and also impossible to resist any longer the impulse to sit in the peaceful, bare little room and watch Freia reading and her mother knitting. Gently Ruth drew from him the story of his acquaintance with

Freia, its supplying to him the need of personal devotion to a cause, and its ripening into a feeling of chivalry ready to blossom into love.

"I wish you would see her, Miss Aften; she is like the other half of you. You do not resemble each other, but you fit into one another," said Frank, wistfully, as he ended his tale.

"Take me with you to see her, Frank."

"Will you really go? You told us of her the first evening you were at the island."

"Gladly. I want to see her again for myself."

"But my parents,—do you know of their feelings?" he queried, with hesitation.

"Yes; they have talked to me and have left me free to do as I think best."

"Then you go on a visit of inspection, of curiosity; that is not fair."

"It is fair. You have not thought enough of what all this means to your parents. Let me go with you for their sake and for her sake. You cannot refuse me."

He could not, and they went. Once again was the boy brought face to face with Chatham. At the top of the steep, straight flight of stairs, which led to the Krumm's rooms, stood Chatham, searching for visible sign that he had found those for whom he was seeking. Unexpectedly Frank and Ruth came close upon him. Chatham's rage was none the less for being restrained, as he said,—

"I believe I have the right of way."

"Excuse me, Mr. Chatham, you will not find yourself at home here," said Ruth, stepping before Frank and trying to lift his hand from the latch.

Chatham had not noticed who was with Frank, and as he heard Ruth's voice he swore a bitter oath of foiled scorn and hurried down the staircase, for their words had attracted attention. Nothing could be seen as people opened their doors, except two persons going quietly into the Krumm's kitchen.

"What's the matter?" said Mrs. Krumm, coming forward, frightened. Seeing Ruth, she exclaimed, "Miss Aften! It isn't possible! I'm so glad you've come. You aren't changed a bit. Freia dear, this is Miss Aften; don't you remember her, when you were a little girl out West?"

"There was a man coming in here; do you know him,—a Mr. Chatham?" demanded Frank, fiercely, turning to Freia before she could speak to Ruth.

Mr. Chatham coming here!" exclaimed the girl, astonished and paler than her mother. "Do I know him? I hate him! I knocked him down the other night, and I'll do it again, if he touches me."

"Why, Freia dear, that's the name of the gentleman who gave me the cup of tea on the Saint John steamer."

Ruth heard the words, and her quick instinct related them to part of her summer experience. She sat down by Mrs. Krumm, telling her she was an old friend of Frank's, and how glad she was to have found her again.

"He has told us of you often. He says you are going to preach," returned the older woman. "I'm not likely ever to hear you; my time's most up."

"You are not well?" asked Ruth.

"No; and I shouldn't mind, if it weren't for my girl. I don't want to leave her alone."

Ruth stretched out her hand to Freia, who had been gazing at her in astonishment, trying to recall her.

"The lady's speaking to you," whispered Mrs. Krumm, feebly.

The daughter came nearer, but did not take the offered hand. Apparently Miss Aften did not notice it, and drew the two women into conversation. Frank sat by, wondering why Freia so avoided him.

There came the heavy steps of men up the stairs. Again the door opened from the outside, slowly, unwillingly, and the tread of many feet came into the room, the men bearing or supporting Wolfgang's weight. They placed him on the bed. His hands moved round as if in search of his wife. She came to him, dumb, meek, as if she understood it all.

"He broke a blood-vessel," said one of the men, "when he was thundering away against capital. He was telling us how patience was a crime, and that we were being ground to pieces 'tween capital and interest, and that the State would give us all work if we weren't so peaceable, when he just choked and filled, and we got him home the best we could."

"You are all very kind," said the wife, "but leave me alone with him now."

She bent over him and called him by the long unused name of their courting days.

"Never mind, girlie," he answered, faintly, between the clots of blood which choked his voice. "I told them the State would fix it all right. Kiss me, Mollie; if there isn't a God, I want your kiss."

He breathed deeply, then all was quiet. Again she

pressed her lips to his. He had found his mistake. Love is stronger than the State.

Freia clung to her mother.

"Cry, mother, do cry; perhaps there is a God; don't look so; don't die too."

The tired woman's head sank on her daughter's shoulder. Frank put his strong arms round them both and steadied them against the bedside. The father, with all his mistakes, the mother, with all her forbearings, were again two in another world.

They laid Mrs. Krumm by her husband's side. Quietly, reverently all was done. Ruth and Freia stayed together in the orphaned girl's room, Freia leaning on her new friend with weary despair. The local Assembly wanted a public funeral. The newspapers mentioned the death of a prominent labor agitator. The men claimed the privilege of burying him whom they had failed to support. They sent money to his daughter, which she returned without thanks. Freia, Ruth, and Frank rode as mourners in the first carriage. The *Sunday Voice*, an anti-rent, anti-interest paper, stated that the son of one of Boston's capitalists attended the obsequies, and by his presence tried to atone for the centuries of dishonor which his ancestors had cast upon the children of toil.

Mr. Stanton thought of his words to Frank and feared. The son, pained at the girl's steady avoidance of him, and still considering himself under bonds to his parents, waited. Neither Mr. nor Mrs. Stanton sought the orphan, but through Miss Aften they shielded her from all the trouble from which she could possibly be saved.

Freia clung to Ruth, imploring that she might not be forsaken, and so it came to pass that Miss Aften persuaded the girl to come with her to the country village where she was to minister. The Stantons could not disapprove of her compassion; the farther off was Freia the better for Frank, they reasoned, but they did wish that the girl might go to Germany, and might there marry one of her own class.

CHAPTER XXV.

A WOMAN'S WORTH.

It was a village shadowed and lightened by mountain gloom and glory to which Miss Aften went. Long ago the church had been established by the missionary zeal of a young divinity student. It was his first and only parish. His spirit had grown fresher and his hair whiter as he lived there. His wife had died in her early youth. He kept the dress in which he had most loved to see her in a cedar box in his room; her face was always before him on his study table; her memory companioned him throughout the day. He knew every child and dog in the village. He counted the value of each farmer's crop and measured the depth of his soul; and when he found it wanting in the due weight of character, he told none of his neighbors. Every girl wanted to be married by him, and every man asked his prayers to attend him into heaven when death ap-

proached. The women gave him new readings for Bible texts. It was said that no other town in the country held so many elderly couples who were lovers still. When they laid him to rest near his church, they carved an open sermon-case on the marble, with the texts of the first and last sermons he had preached unto them,—"Receive us to live and die with you," and "Grow in grace."

Then came a young man with the modern church accompaniments, and the parish grew and flourished wonderfully. His fame spread to the city; he felt it his duty to go where there was more to be done, so pleasantly does ambition hide itself under the cover of zeal. After him came other stray shepherds, till the people grew too old or were too young to care about going to church, and the society dwindled. It would have disbanded if it had not been for a fund left by an elderly man, once born in the village, who had carried away with him when he went West the recollection of his mother in her Sunday-best, with a nosegay in the white folds of her stomacher. He had lately died and left a gift, the income of which would furnish half the sum necessary for an economical, bachelor pastor. This fund reanimated the faithful few, and they decided to get as much talent as they could for their money. They heard candidates who never suited everybody and who wished to preach but once a day. To be sure, the parishioners cared to go to church but once a day, yet that was no reason for a minister's disinclination to preach.

At last, in the church committee, some one suggested that a woman could be hired cheaper than a man. Silence followed this boldness. Deacon Jones rose:

"I have been off and on with this church nigh unto forty years, and I never yet seen a woman, bonneted or unbonneted, mount those blessed pulpit-stairs. Women belong to the pews, where they are suitable for prayer and temperance purposes, and I don't say but what some of them have a wonderful gift at it, but for regular Sunday preaching, year in and year out, they aren't constructed."

He sat down and wiped his forehead with evident self-approval.

"I agree with Deacon Jones on principle," said farmer Smith, rising, "but this is a business meeting, and as a business investment I think it would be a good plan to get a woman minister. She could do a good deal besides preaching. There's always plenty of nursing, and if she's handy about fixings, I think we might board her round and not put our hands very deep in our pockets. The income of the fund might almost carry us through. What say you, Brother Young?"

"I think if I've got to be put into the kingdom of heaven, a woman could do a sight more with me than a man. I shouldn't mind having such a minister round among my grand-daughters. I don't like the Divinity-School saplings we've been tapping 'fore they were ripe; but I don't take to Brother Smith's boarding notions. A woman's got to be treated respectful, and we ought to send a carryall for her every Sunday."

Whatever Farmer Young thought, every one else adopted. After further discussion, it was concluded that he should be a committee of one to find the new

minister. He went to Boston and was directed to Miss Aften. He meant to tell her frankly what every one had said, but when he saw her he decided that it would be safer to get her there first, and then if the parish did not treat her well, he trusted himself to make them. The homely kindness of the farmer pleased Ruth; the quietness and smallness of the village were attractive; the tenderness which the old man manifested for the first pastor of the church touched her. She decided to go, for a while at least.

Great was the interest when Farmer Young returned, saying that she would come. He always enjoyed a harmless, practical joke, and amused himself by refusing to give any account of her personal appearance or his impression of her. Suffice it, she was a woman who was willing to accept their terms, and for that very reason they inferred that she would be more or less disagreeable, and had consented to come because she could get nothing better. Her future boarding-place was the constant theme. Farmer Young wrote offering to make arrangements for her as cheaply as he could. She replied that she preferred to go to the village hotel.

"She'll use up her salary pretty quick," said the private family who had expected her as a high-priced boarder, unless they made a reduction if she helped in the winter dress-making.

The church was swept and cleaned. In the days of its second minister it had been enlarged, recarpeted, and beset with stained-glass windows, as *in memoriams* of prominent city ministers, the intimate friends of the Boston or New York boarders who had first enriched

and then demoralized the village. The brilliant glass, with its allegorical figures, bore no resemblance to the Puritan plainness of the building, which gave no hint of cruciform architecture. Two weeks had passed since Miss Aften had been engaged, and she was expected the next day.

It was late Saturday evening when Miss Aften reached Mendham, yet it was soon known that she had arrived and had brought a friend with her without notifying the parish committee or telling any one of the degree of relationship between them. The carryall went for her at the first pealings of the Sunday-morning bell, but she had already gone over to the vestry, "just as if she were a man," said Farmer Young, who had hitched up his horse for nothing.

When she entered the pulpit, a few small boys stood on tiptoe and were pulled down into place by their mothers; the church was very full. The nervous tension of the congregation would have manifested itself to any one less self-conscious than Ruth, who as soon as she began the services forgot the people and thought only of what she was saying. There was no special allusion to them nor to herself in her sermon, which seemed like a broken poem about God's need of man. When her full, rich voice poured itself out in the singing of the last hymn, the other voices softened and hers alone led from the music to the benediction.

As she came down from the pulpit-stairs, the people waited to see what she would do next. She disturbed their notions of etiquette by going among them as if she had been their child just welcomed home. If she had gone off into the vestry, they would have said she

was proud. It was, however, at the Sunday-school that the final suffrage was in her favor.

"She took everything as a matter of course," said the village gossip, retailing the events of the morning to the village invalid.

"What did she wear?"

"Why, she wasn't dressed as if she were going to lecture in the Town-Hall, but her dress was like a kind of minister's gown, made tight, only it wasn't black. I shall ask her at the first sewing-circle who cut it for her. I suppose she made it herself."

"Let me know, do. It will be kind of convenient 'gainst I get well. Where do you suppose she'll call first?"

"I don't know. By good rights she ought to go to tea to Deacon Young's Monday night, and to Farmer Stebbins's Tuesday, and then she ought to come to me next."

"If she should happen to come here first, supposing some one chanced to tell her that I'd been sick longer than any one else in the village, I'd advise her to drop in at the Baptist prayer-meeting to-night; it would be sociable like, and it's a good way to see your friends when you can't make calls."

"I heard her talking to the teachers at the Sunday-school, and I guess they told her lots after it was over; she didn't take any particular part in it; she said they'd better manage it in their own way till she had learnt from them; and then when it stopped, she talked to them all and they to her. I must say she isn't a bit frightened like as one ought to be in doing a responsible thing, all the more so being a woman."

"Do you suppose she'll want to be president of the W. C. T. U. and the Suffrage Club?"

"I should think she'd better manage her own business; let them that's used to things take care of them. She isn't old enough," replied the gossip, who was vice-president in both organizations.

While they were talking, Miss Aften called. "I heard about you at the school, and thought it would be so pleasant to come and see you, if you will let me."

"I'm obliged to you. I'd not calculated on your coming so soon, but you are welcome all the same," said the invalid.

Her other caller stayed as long as she could contrive to make herself useful in shaking up the pillows or arranging the spoons in the tumblers, and returned as soon as she saw from the window in the house across the street that Miss Aften had left.

"Did she pray with you?" she asked of the sick woman.

"No, she didn't."

"What did she do?"

"She didn't do anything, but I feel so much better; it's a great comfort to know she understands me better than any one else ever did. She says she's going to the prayer-meeting to-night; that her mother was a Baptist, and she always feels as if her mother liked to know she went to 'em, off and on."

"You don't suppose she's a Spiritualist or a Mind-Reader, do you?"

"No, I don't," returned the invalid, with unusual energy.

"Well, you seem to know all about her uncommon quick."

"I should think any one might who just looked at her. She's got the quietest face I ever saw."

"The Sunday-school young ones do say that they shan't mind now coming to school as long as she's going to be there."

It was at Farmer Jones's, a few days after, that it was settled that the parish would keep her through the winter, any way, and that if the snow drifted, they'd ring the bell early on Sunday morning, to let the folks know there was not to be any church, as Miss Aften, the little minister, might take cold.

"I told her," said Farmer Jones at the village grocery that week, "that no young woman could have conducted herself with more becomingness than she did on Sunday, in coming to call on me so soon. She said she'd like to drop in often and take a cup of tea with me, seeing I was alone. I told her I didn't see how there could be any impropriety in it, and I asked her if she expected me to go regular to church? She said, 'on no account,' only to let her come and call on me regular."

It was in this personal way of adaptation that Miss Aften began her ministry. No promises were made on her part, no requirements were expected from the parish; no previously set plan of work was outlined. One meeting or class after another seemed to form itself, slowly but spontaneously.

With Freia, Ruth's method, if that could be called method which was her nature, was to trust to time for the girl's recovery from despair. Freia lived for a long time in a state of what nowadays is called nervous pros-

tration, but what was termed in old times want of submission to the divine will. She had not only no faith, but she had been taught to look upon the church as the pretentious basis of all authority and the destroyer of human freedom. When Ruth had told her that she was to have the care of a parish, she took it as indifferently as if Miss Aften had said she was to be the matron of some orphanage.

As Freia grew more observant of things about her, and understood that Ruth was really a minister, she became afraid of her, and if she had had money she might have left her. Miss Aften understood this phase, and waited for its evolution. She considered it as due to a temperament bred among conflicting good and evil tendencies.

The growth of much modern philanthropy or political economy she attributed to an impatience of the individual in his haste in working against time and in organizing an attempted permanent condition of affairs when the elements of society were still in a very fluid state, and must be combined and recombined before any authoritative or final crystallization could be formed. She saw also, on the other hand, that the exclusion of competition and the maximum of state protection necessarily included the minimum of personal energy. The evil tendencies in Socialism, so called, arose, she believed, from jealousy, a desire that no one should be better off than one is one's self; from a laziness which leads one to prefer a dead level of attainment to greater personal effort, and weakly seeks reliance upon an authorized source of supply and acceptance of the paternal interference of the State rather than choose the pains and difficulties of personal responsibility.

Paternal interference and special legislation are interchangeable terms. Wherever the line in legislation is drawn, it will always be considered an arbitrary one by those who would draw it at some other point. It can only be drawn, even fairly well, by an historic study of sequences, by broad classification of human interests, and by prophetic insight into results of present action. The spirit of misrule, as exemplified by Wolfgang, made each discontented person endeavor to construct a State.

Freia had perceived her father's mistake, but she had not worked out her conclusions into any system as yet, and she was still far too inexperienced to do so. The inertia of her parent in regard to hard work; his denunciations of capital as capital; the personal kindness she had received at the Women's Union, on the basis of wages and then of equal friendship; above all, the devotion of her own spirit to those who had valued steerage-folks as of equal worth in saving with any other part of humanity, had taught her what her independent nature could have acquired in no other way.

She had now to learn that the vested rights of the church related to attitudes of mind, to status of character, and not to control of outward acts, except so far as the outward man voluntarily accepts the sway of spirit over matter. Ruth saw that Freia was afraid that she might seek to lead her, in virtue of her profession, and therefore carefully abstained from any allusion to her own belief. This abstention in turn produced its effect upon Freia, who discovered that the ministry did not imply proselytism.

The two women lived together, Ruth busy with her

parish, the other girl gradually coming out of her benumbed condition, her fear changing to wonder and her wonder to love.

CHAPTER XXVI.

A NEWSPAPER PARAGRAPH.

CHATHAM chose to consider Frank as responsible for Wolfgang's death, which by Freia's removal had deprived him of possibilities. A man of more courage would have gone to Mendham rusticating, but he regarded Miss Aften as a Judgment Day, and dreaded any sudden unrolling of the scroll which she had in her possession. He avenged himself by courting the young man's society more assiduously, with the design of making him as disingenuous as he was himself. The ardor of Frank's nature made him overleap these slow approaches to destruction of morality, though he received as valid Chatham's explanation of his visit to Freia as having been simply actuated by kindness. He could not reconcile the excuse with the girl's words, but as his recollections of that evening, with its rapid succession of events, was confused, he concluded that he either had misunderstood her or that her words had referred to somebody else.

Frank was waiting with sad obedience till his mother should hold him free to seek Freia, for his honor revolted at taking his father at his word. A distance had grown up between him and his mother, which now and then was spasmodically broken, only to leave in

them both a weariness regarding the something which lay athwart their lives, termed Freia. The boy had timed himself again and again, saying, "I will wait this week; surely mother will speak." He knew she heard from Miss Aften, and that Freia had been in no condition to see him, even if he had gone to her. In fact, he had asked her if he might come when they parted, and she had drawn back at his request with such dread that he had taken it for granted that, even if she could ever love him, he must begin again through the slow approaches of friendship, which he once hoped had been surmounted. His mother often read him parts of Ruth's letters, but they contained no detail on which his imagination could build. To read these letters aloud was at least an acknowledgment on his mother's part that Freia existed, and he was conscious of the past generosity to her at the time of her parents' death. They would have helped any poor woman, his bitter after-thought told him.

It is often through our foes that blessings come to us, and so it was through Chatham that the reserve was broken between Mrs. Stanton and her son. Chatham was calling at their house, in the lady's chosen hour for her intimate friends, for he had the *entrée* of her apartments, much to her own surprise. He knew too well the vantage it gave him in society to ever abandon it. He chanced to take up the *Register*, and asked how long since she had patronized a church paper, even of the liberal kind.

Forgetting to whom she was speaking, she answered, "Since Miss Aften went to Mendham. I read its column of personal items for her sake."

"That little episode at the island, Mrs. Stanton, last summer, you remember? You know there are two sides to everything. I am sorry such an impressionable person as Miss Krumm is under her care."

"What do you mean?"

"Oh, nothing; but an elderly person of more experience might—— It is not a matter which concerns me at all."

Frank's restlessness had led him into his mother's tea-room, and he happened to hear the last part of Chatham's words. In a trembling voice he asked,—

"What do you mean? I have a right to know." No sooner had he spoken than he regretted his self-betrayal.

"My dear boy, nothing. A woman-minister would not suit my ideas any way;" and he laughed coarsely, as he put down his cup of tea, which he had not tasted, and left the room in his slow, graceful, complacent manner.

"How can you tolerate that man?" exclaimed Frank, hardly waiting for the door to close. "Mother, how long must I wait? There is some one coming. Ring the bell; say you are engaged. He has made me speak when I did not mean to, and now you must hear me."

Mrs. Stanton yielded to her boy's imperativeness, and gave orders that no one should be admitted.

"Do you still care, Frank?"

"Let me go and see; I cannot tell. I think I shall, but while I am in this unrest I can do nothing, think of nothing but what may be."

She was silent. She struggled to tell him to go. In loving her husband more, she had begun to see that it

was possible for Frank to love Freia and herself also. Her heart leaped with pride in his patient nobility, which had kept him at her side, for his patience had been far greater than his irritation; that had come at intervals.

"If you go, shall you ask her?"

"I am not sure. This waiting has shown me that to marry her for a cause, or a cause in her, ought not, cannot satisfy a woman's heart."

"How did you find that out?"

"Miss Aften told me, and I have learned it from you and father lately, this last fall. Perhaps my troubles or my wilfulness have made you depend more on each other."

Mrs. Stanton crimsoned, either with pleasure or mortification.

"If you love her, shall you ask her?"

It was Frank's turn for embarrassment. "No; I shall wait."

"For what?"

"For you to want me to ask her."

The crowning gift had come to the mother's aching heart. Her boy laid low his young ardor and asked her to bless it before he carried it to the service of another. No mother who could recall even one thrill of her girlhood's betrothal could refuse to a son freedom to seek and serve.

"Go and bring her to me, Frank."

Even as she spoke she saw how he cared by the transfiguration of his countenance. Her jealous heart smote her, though her son knew it not.

Later that evening, when Brooks was with them,

Frank asked him to go up with him to Mendham. Mrs. Stanton tried to check what she deemed an inopportune question.

"I wish you would and see Freia yourself. I suppose you know all about it," he added, with a boyish frankness, which brought a smile to Ned's grave face.

"I have been rather wishing to look upon the mountains, and I might get a glimpse of them by going with you."

"Yes, and you could see Miss Aften also."

"Yes," answered Ned, so gravely and casually that Frank little thought what he had suggested.

"By the way, did you ever find out why she came to Farmer Drew's? It is such a secretive place to find."

"Do you remember those children?"

"I was there only two or three times; one of them had a queer twitching in her nose, like—who was it like?"

"Think," said Ned, who had observed with dislike Frank's acquaintance with Chatham, and now that he had facts to state, embraced the opportunity, suddenly offered him, of frustrating it. "Like Philip Chatham's?"

"Yes, exactly like Chatham's."

Mrs. Stanton's quick movement made Frank look up and suspect that more was meant than his ears caught.

"Precisely," observed Ned; "heredity tells."

"What possible relation was there?"

"Only her own father."

"How do you know? How do you dare to insinuate such a thing?"

"Whatever I have suspected I have not known surely very long; now I am certain."

"Who was the mother?" asked Mrs. Stanton, anxiously.

"A Wisconsin girl, whom Chatham had entrapped and whom Miss Aften rescued."

"Did Ruth tell you?"

"No."

"Then how do you know?"

"She must have known that I guessed it was Chatham's child. I did know it was the farmer's adopted daughter, and so induced him to show me the papers one day. They were correctly made out, and when I went this fall to Milwaukee I looked up the matter. Miss Aften had promised the dying mother that the girl should be adopted and should never know who was her father. Through Miss Aften's Western friends she had it taken into an infant-asylum there, and from there adopted by Drew, of whom she had known somehow."

"Was all this the reason you went West?" inquired the lady, who had never quite liked Brooks's silence in regard to his visit there, when he was generally on a confidential footing with her.

"Perhaps so,—yes."

"And now?"

"I have lately heard that the child has died."

"And you hope that somehow Ruth may feel released from a burden, and that it may make a difference to you?"

"I wish it might."

Frank had listened with astonishment. As it came

to him what the difference might be, he knew that Ned's grief might be far more hopeless than his own.

"You should not judge too harshly," he ventured, for want of something better to say. It was like sunlight apologizing for the black cloud which came in its way.

Ned shook his head and continued: "Chatham has since tried to injure Miss Aften in many ways, but I think he has played his last card." And he took out of his pocket a crumpled newspaper proof and pointed to a paragraph, which insinuated that Miss Aften's entrance into the ministry was an unfortunate venture. "You see it is not explicit; it creates discomfort in the reader's mind, and leaves him with an impression that if the whole were told it would be to her an injury."

"It is not going to be published, surely. Why, it is horrid! Let me burn it right up."

"By no means; that is the only copy there is of it; it is my evidence."

"How did you get it?"

"By chance. I have been afraid that he might seek to hurt her since his attempt to see Freia. You don't know of that; never mind, I will tell you another time. I was in the editor's office this morning, on some business of my own, when this proof was sent down for him to look over. Knowing that I knew Miss Aften, he showed it to me, saying that it had come in as a communication, without the full name of the writer, and that it had fallen into the hands of the sub-editors, who regarded personal items as pecuniary profit, and that it had been set up without his

knowledge. He did not quite like its tone, and showed it to me for information. Of course I bought up the whole edition at once; their men will work extra hours and strike off another. I shall see him to-night."

"And if you find you have got hold of the wrong man?" said Frank.

"Then you will not have the embarrassment of my company in going to Mendham."

The young man knew Brooks too well to imagine that he would suspect any one except on a moral certainty, and accepted this silent challenge of his friendship.

"Shall you tell her if you go?"

"No; it is enough for me to know I have been of service to her."

He could say no more. He had never mentioned her name so many times since they parted as he had in the last ten minutes, and he left abruptly.

"Come round with me to my room," said Brooks to Chatham a few hours later at the club.

"Thank you; your civility is portentous, but so unusual that I accept it."

The two men were soon seated in Brooks's comfortable quarters, with cigars, caviare, and claret.

"So deuced cosey here, Brooks; no wonder you don't allow yourself to be married."

"I have never seen a woman who would marry me."

"That's a new way of putting it, quite humble. How is——?"

"Our mutual acquaintance, Miss Aften?" said Ned, interrupting him. "It was concerning her that I wanted to see you."

"I am afraid I can't accommodate you there; fact is, I thought you were the privileged man."

"Have you seen this, Chatham?" asked Brooks, placing before him the paragraph he had shown Mrs. Stanton, and watching him narrowly.

Brooks never could have known he was in the right by any change in Chatham's color or trembling of his hand as he took the paper, save for the rabbit-like twitching of the man's left nostril.

"I thought you were above minding personal gossip when it did not concern yourself?"

"In this case it happens to."

"Am I to congratulate you?"

"Not at all. Miss Aften is my friend, and I intend she shall have fair play. It is dirty work to insinuate about antecedents and trumpery like that when she befriended you at your direst need."

"I did not know my biography was published. You will have to explain yourself more fully. You have given yourself a great deal of trouble, fighting windmills and all that sort of thing."

"Do you mean to imply that you know nothing about this?"

"I have made neither assertion nor denial; it is you who have made accusations."

Brooks's question had given opportunity to Chatham, who was quick to throw back the burden of proof upon him. "Look here, Brooks, this is the second time you have affronted me; you can apologize or quit. My relations with Miss Aften are none of your business."

"Your relations to her are simply confined to her taking care of your child."

His opponent started. How on earth did Brooks know that, and if he knew that, how much more did he know? Chatham was not unaware that there was a line at which even club men draw the boundary of acquaintance. He would at any rate set Brooks at defiance as long as he could.

"Come, now, proofs," he demanded, in a bravado manner.

"I have been to Milwaukee and seen certain papers. Marie Bashterkieff was the girl whom you deserted and would have let die in wretchedness if it had not been for Miss Aften. You know what you did at Campobello. You sent that paragraph to the editor, signed with your initials reversed, and here is your postal in the same handwriting as that of the paragraph, yours in both cases, signed with your initials again, but in correct order this time, asking the editor to send a marked copy to the Mendham *Gazette.*

Chatham stretched out his legs to the open fire and put his hands in his pockets. Brooks continued: "I simply want you to understand that you have got to let her alone."

"I thought you just denied that she had given you any right to defend her. Did she send you here?"

"No. Listen," replied Brooks, making a great effort to control himself, the man's behavior was so repugnant to him. "I love Miss Aften, and she declines to marry me. It makes no difference; I shall go on loving her to the end of time, and I want you to let her have peace."

Chatham's amazement was unbounded at Brooks's frankness. There was still enough manliness in him

for him to have a kind of physical admiration for a man who laid his heart bare before another man to induce that other man to cease his persecutions for a girl's sake.

"Has she told you about me?"

"Only that when she met you at Campobello she wished to avoid you for the sake of another person. Long after that evening I inferred it was because of the child or its mother. I give you my word as a man of honor I know nothing from her."

Chatham knew that Brooks could be believed. His face was terrible to see. The tall clock ticked heavily.

"Brooks, you've conquered," said Chatham, as it struck another quarter. "Your confession deserves one as frank. I loved Ruth Aften as intensely as you do. I am not over-moral, I grant you, but I'd have been a Puritan if she had loved me. She is the only pure woman I ever knew who wasn't married. When I saw her with Marie, I loathed myself, and could have strangled Marie to have hastened her death if Miss Aften would have married me. She kept me at arm's length; she would not let me touch the skirt of her dress. She pitied me. Good God! how she looked at me! but she would have none of me. I have annoyed her because it kept me doing something about her; it put her in my power. I would not save her from any torment unless she loved me; if she married any other man I would kill him."

He stopped, Brooks did not speak. He knew Chatham must love her, though the very thought of such love was torture to him that it could come across her

path. He sat still and waited. He had no words for speech.

At length Chatham spoke: "I'll give it up. The devil got hold of me when I sent that paragraph. Is it too late to stop the edition?" And he glanced hastily at the clock.

"I have bought it up," replied Brooks. "A new one will be issued without that paragraph."

"You did! And she will not marry you?"

"She knows nothing of it, I told you, and never will."

The two men faced each other. Brooks had grown older in the last eight months, and the gas-light showed it.

"I'll curse you," hissed Chatham, "if ever you marry her, but never so long as she lives will I injure her in any way, I swear it to you, though my oath is not good for much. How you found this out beats me. Let it pass. Damn it! how I loved her!"

He wrung Brooks's hand fiercely, and the two men parted, never to meet again, though Chatham always thought better of himself because Brooks had appealed to him as if he were still capable of honor.

CHAPTER XXVII.

A SHAWL.

It was late on Saturday night when Frank Stanton and Ned Brooks went to the tavern in Mendham, not to the hotel where their friends were boarding.

"Shall you go and hear her this morning?" asked Frank at their Sunday breakfast.

"I had forgotten about her—engagements when we started yesterday, or I should have proposed waiting till Monday, for she will be at church."

As the incongruity of his words and wishes struck him he smiled.

"Shall you not go and hear her?"

"I think not. Look after yourself this morning, Frank; I'll go round later."

He was near her, and yet never had Brooks felt himself more removed from her. He would have climbed the bell-rope and cut it in two, like any boy, if he could have stopped its ringing as the church hour came. He watched for her to go up the church-steps, and yet held on to his chair that if he saw her he might not spring after her and pull her away all to himself, all his; no audience, no parish; his wife, to speak and sing for him alone. He saw her not, and feared she was dead. He stole inside the porch and caught the tones of her voice. She was alive, then, in a pulpit! He went out before the friendly sexton could speak to him. He supposed he had grown accustomed to the idea of

sharing her life with her parish, if she would take back her refusal of him. The nearer he came to her the more he wanted her sweetness and strength hidden in his heart alone. He wandered past the church towards the hotel.

The parlor door was open; he entered. He knew it was her's by the little indications of her taste in books and pictures. He took up her pen and let it lay tenderly in his fingers. Freia, coming in, thus found him and drew back.

"I beg pardon," said Ned, rising. "I am an old acquaintance of Miss Aften's. You are Miss Krumm."

"Miss Aften is at church. Will you not take a chair?"

"Thanks, no. Do you not go to church with her?"

"Never."

"Does she go alone?"

"Oh, no; the whole village takes care of her. I don't know how to go to church."

"Why don't you go?"

"I don't want to. They all like to hear her."

He laid down the pen. Was that the way in which they spoke of her?

"She isn't a bit like a minister," continued the girl.

"What is she like?"

"Like each one's dearest friend. Won't you wait? she'll be in soon."

"Not now."

"Shall I tell her you'll come again?"

"You do not know who I am."

"Yes, I do: you are Mr. Brooks. I saw a photo-

graph of you once," said she, blushing at her own imprudence.

Ned looked round the parlor, hoping to see it. Freia interpreting his glance, added,—

"It is not here; Mr. Frank Stanton had it." And she blushed more deeply at his kindly smile, which yet puzzled her by its sadness. She knew not how much brighter it would have been if her answer had given Ruth's name.

The people were coming from church and he hurried away. Freia's description of Miss Aften had attuned Brooks's mood to one of more calmness. He waited through the day, hoping that chance would bring him what he came to seek.

Frank, impatient, sought Freia in the afternoon. His welcome was cordial, but such as she might have given to any old friend.

"You are not like yourself, Miss Krumm."

"I am becoming my new self. I am sorry if you do not like the change."

"You have grown as stately as the white dahlias you said you liked; you are more wonderful, but you are not the girl I used to know."

"I never shall forget the gratitude I owe you, Mr. Stanton. You are right, I am very different."

"What are you going to do?"

"I am going to have a cause, poor father's old word. I must teach those who are like what I was."

"Are you going away?"

"I don't know just where nor how. I cannot stay much longer on Miss Aften's bounty. I want to repay her. She has been most wonderfully kind to me; that

part of her goodness I can only give back in love. She has helped me to come out of the darkness which surrounded me. I do not want to talk of the old days till my purpose is clearer for the new time. It shapes itself more and more each week."

"I don't understand you."

"I can't put it to you plainly yet. Don't you see what I mean? I used to believe in one authoritative organization, in one exclusive road to liberty. Now I see that liberty means order, and that order must come through knowledge and patience."

"Don't you believe in the power of combinations?"

"Yes, but still more do I believe that combined force is apt to be aggressive, and that individuals must be patient. Patience is eternal and lessens the weight of individual responsibility. We need not be in haste with ourselves or others."

Frank gazed at her, delighted. They had changed places. He was still on the search for actual deed. She had begun to formulate thought, so that she could teach others what she had learned. His chivalric nature gladly turned to her as teacher as she passed from out the need of him as protector.

Miss Aften knew that Brooks was in town. She could not send any message to him and waited, pained that he did not come. The Sunday past, his eagerness to be with her, his sureness that he needed her, even if she could give him but part of her life, carried him towards her. Her welcome was so sweet and glad that he hoped. Through the week Frank and he lingered in the village. There were walks and talks, and evenings when she made the tea for them, and they sat at

her table, which were never to be forgotten. It was fortunate that the two men had each the other to check any manifestations of undue warmth in either of them as a lover. Not a word was spoken which could be construed as passing the bounds of friendship. If it had been otherwise, the two women might have taken alarm and grown reserved. As it was, whatever embarrassment had marked the first meeting had disappeared, and both gave themselves up to the enjoyment of the old friendliness revived.

The village people gossiped harmlessly, and hoped "Miss Aften warn't going to settle down with a husband just as they'd got all comfortably fixed, for marriage warn't always nat'ral, and sometimes it warn't fair to others." The talk did not reach Ruth. Brooks heard it, however. Never before had gossip, with the possibilities it roused, been so pleasant, yet his tenderness for her warned him that he must either leave or stay forever.

It was one of those days in early spring which show forth the natural meaning of the coming Easter when he and she strolled beyond the village confines. The bare, distant hills loomed up around them, the noisy brook glided like a harbinger of merriment through the meadows.

"Do you remember, Ruth," he asked, as they rested after their long walk in a sunshiny place, "my asking you if I might come again?"

"I told you you would not want to come," said Ruth, in a low tone, quick to take alarm.

"But I do want to. I have tried so hard not to want to come. Last Sunday was torture; you were in there,"

pointing to the church, whose steeple could just be seen through the misty air, "but it was as if the whole earth separated you from me. Ruth, I come far more humbly now. Then I wanted you all, all mine; now I will share you with others if you will only come to me. You shall be free to come and go, to work, to—to preach; only let my home be yours. Take me, Ruth, child, woman, my beloved, my need, my comfort. Let me creep into your love, for which I will watch and wait. Ruth, be my wife."

"Have mercy on me, Ned."

"Have I pained you, sweet?"

"I didn't dream of this. I thought we were friends forever. It was so beautiful to be with you this week."

"And could you be content with nothing more?"

"Yes."

"Say it again, Ruth. Look up at me, beloved. Say it to me, if you must, with eye and lip. Could you be content with nothing more?"

She raised her head and looked at him steadfastly, with grief in every line of her beautiful face.

"Yes, Ned, with nothing more."

If agony could have drawn from her another answer, it would have been the suffering in his countenance, which was contorted with the effort of a strong man to restrain his whole nature. He caught her hands and held them as in a vice while she spoke. He dropped them softly, slowly, as her last word came, and bent down beside her. It was very still, save for the heart-beats of each. Once more he turned and faced her.

"Ruth, when I am an old man and you are an old

woman, and I come to you again, will you come to me then and put your arms around me?"

"You will not want me, Ned."

"I shall want you all through this life and the next, if there is one, and there must be one that I may love you there."

"There is, Ned, there is," said she, in glad, triumphant tones. "There I will come to you forever."

"But not till then?"

"Ned, dear, you will not want me before, here in this divided life."

"I shall, Ruth; but if death comes to me first, before old age, promise me that then you will come to me and put your arms around me and draw my head down into your bosom and kiss me and call me yours, your best beloved."

"I will, Ned, I promise," said the girl, brokenly, with swimming eyes. "I will come to you wherever you are and call you mine." And her face upreached to his like a flower quivering on its stem.

"Then let me lay my head in your lap now and go to rest for a while. I am very tired, Ruth."

His voice sounded weak, pitiful. She drew his head towards her and laid it on her knees. She bent over him and kissed him on hair and brow, on eyes and lips. She kissed him again, slowly, gently, softly, like a dying wind. She stroked back the hair from his forehead. She ran her fingers around his neck; she breathed upon him with peace and sorrow. He smiled and the tears stole under his eyelashes. She kissed them off. Still he smiled. The seconds passed into minutes, and

he slept. She took off her shawl and slowly put it under his head on the soft earth, still caressing him as a mother caresses her babe when she lays it down for slumber. He slept; she knew it by the quiet, regular breathing, the smile still resting on his face. She stole away and left him, her own heart almost breaking. He woke quickly and looked around. She was gone.

"God bless her sweet heart," he murmured, kissing the ground where she had sat. He took up her shawl and drew it around him, as if to put himself in her embrace. He folded it up tenderly and bore it with him. He was never separated from it in after years. It made his pillow at night as he dreamed of her sweetness. By day he laid it away in valise or drawer, wherever he might be. That night he took his lonely way to New York, leaving word for Frank that he had gone.

The young man understood it. He could not forgive Ruth, and he could not comprehend how his friend had ever hoped. When the next morning he saw Ruth's weary face, her slow step, her bent gait, he sorrowed and took courage. "It cannot always be so. She must love him when they are old and she cannot work; then she will let him take care of her," he thought. He could not ask Freia to give him what his friend had not gained from Ruth, and he too left, promising to come again.

When Frank told his mother what had happened, she came close to her husband, glad there was no life-work between them. Frank still waited.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

EASTER SUNDAY.

THE spring burst in all its glory. Like a calla lily Ruth had unfolded in strength of wisdom and in beauty of helpful living, till the Local Conference had heard of her and asked if Easter-week might not bring to her the symbol of ordination. She hesitated. The same reasoning which led her to seek the Committee on Fellowship induced her to accept this outward sanctioning of her profession. She entreated Mr. and Mrs. Stanton to be present. "I want," she wrote, "some close, human friendship around me as this seal of work is put upon me. Will you come to me and be with me through it? Your creed and mine will chant the same Te Deum to the Father of an Infinite Majesty."

Farmer Jones considered Miss Aften's ordination as his own affair.

"'Tain't suitable a woman, all the more so seeing as it is Miss Aften, should be set apart on a week-day. It orter be on a Sunday, and Easter Sunday, too; 'tain't as if I believed in the flowery notions about the day, but it's suited to her, and the Conference can just as likely hitch up and drive over a Sunday afternoon as it can on a Wednesday. I declare I'll just set it a going."

The more he talked about it the more convinced he became that this might be his last opportunity in the flesh to make an occasion; in fact, if he could see this

thing through, well, he could dispense with some of the ceremonies at his own funeral, in the prospect of which he had always taken a proud delight, rehearsing to himself what ought then to be said. He took the stump as usual at the parish meeting and expressed his opinions forcibly. Some of the women wanted lots of clergy present, Miss Aften charged, and the parish, especially the men, told what they ought to do; the addresses closing with a reception and a regular supper. The men, on the other hand, were inclined to dispense with as much formality as possible, and Miss Aften begged that it might be a quiet time, with no leanings towards festivities. Farmer Jones suddenly espoused her views, and declared that all along he had been of her way of thinking, and that he'd just come to tell them what he and she had settled the night before, when she came round for a cup of tea.

Farmer Young agreed: "If Miss Aften don't want no fuss made, there ain't nothin' in the Scriptures ag'in' it. I move we appoint a select committee to carry out things accordin' to what's agreeable to the young lady."

Then Farmer Jones rose again: "I want it understood, so there shan't be any mistake, that I ain't going to have her charged by any one; she's got her own way of doing things, and we don't want a man telling her what her business is when she knows it out of her own heart. I ain't a-going, either, to have any of that fellowship-hand-business, a-making my old blood jealous. As for the sermon, she's got to preach that herself; there ain't any one else equal to the emergency."

And so it came to pass that on Easter Sunday the Con-

ference ordained her. The long-time invalid, the good-natured gossip, the busy housewife and the horny-handed farmer, the village blacksmith and the kindly village idiot, the grocer and the dry-goods man, the new and the old doctor, the lawyer and the lawyer's boy, the ministers, Episcopal, Methodist, and Baptist, walked or rode in single or double teams to the church, which the village children had decked with such early wild flowers and green boughs as they could find. No city clergyman was summoned, only the country pastors near by, men with their lives full of small privations, petty economies, and household joys, the self-abnegating missionaries of the faith, uncrowned kings of daily life,—a kind of real family party, as Farmer Jones reckoned it.

It was a strange and homely scene to Mr. and Mrs. Stanton and Frank, to whom the Episcopal service or no service was familiar. Freia had been busy with the flowers the night before, and they had not seen her. If Brooks had asked her now if she heard Ruth preach, she would have told him, "Always." Across the church, in a pew close by Farmer Young, sat a woman of wondrous beauty and stature, with the coloring of perfect health and the poise of head which betokened command of self and others. The yellow hair told Mrs. Stanton who it was.

She felt herself grow old and wrinkled before such youth. Self-consciousness forgot itself, as she saw Ruth's bowed head, while the oldest minister of the Conference, a man of eighty years, prayed for his young sister in the faith, coming into the glory of the Lord. She saw Farmer Young hobbling with his cane out of

the pew on to the platform and Miss Aften quietly standing before him like an angel clad in cloudy white.

"Young woman, the parish elected me to give our church into your keeping and to tell you how uncommon glad we are that you've come to us, and that you be chosen of the Lord to rule over us. We want you to go in and out among us, as Ruth of old went in and out among the sheaves a-gathering the harvest; and when it comes our time to be garnered in, we want you to lend a hand and pull us through. There aren't any keys of the church to give you, but I've brought you this old Bible; it belonged to the first minister of this church, God bless him. Them yellow bits of paper in it are his marks, which told him the Scripture words for weddings and funerals. Maybe they'll be a help to you."

He handed her the book, pulled out his handkerchief, wiped his eyes, and hobbled back to his pew.

Ruth took the book and, holding it in her hand, spoke to them of her gladness in coming to them; of her desire that they should all grow in truth and happiness, and show by their daily lives that the sunsets of the old organizations built on theology had melted into the sunrise of living religious deeds, whose deepening rays would reach into the power of individual belief.

It was Freia's voice which led them as they sang,—

"The soul hath lifted moments
Above the drift of days,
When life's great meaning breaketh
In sunrise on our ways."

Way back in the church, close up against the wall, almost hidden, sat a man of middle life, with a look of premature age in his face and bearing.

"Did you see Ned Brooks there?" asked Mrs. Stanton of Ruth in the evening.

"I thought so; he will always be where I need him most."

"I do not understand you, Ruth."

"Do not try; it must be as it is."

"But if he should ever see as you see, into the heart of life?"

"Then his reason, not his love, will have led him to it."

"And then?"

But Ruth answered not.

"You are more of a minister and less a missionary, more a mystic and less an ascetic, than any one I ever saw," answered Mrs. Stanton, indignantly.

CHAPTER XXIX.

"N'AURAY AULTRE."

It was well that Mr. Stanton, Sr., and Freia met for the first time that day alone, for if she could have controlled her speech, she could not have quieted her face.

"Are you so glad to see me, my child?" he asked, with a proud tenderness born of her past misery and her present fond humility.

"I have often dreamed of meeting you, sir. I was always in distress and you always brought me out of it."

"But those days are over."

"Yes, but you will help me still."

"How do you need me now?"

"To help me work for others. I am going to the city, back to the old places, to tell the people life is not hopeless. You will build them little cottages in the country, where the skies and the flowers can do for them what they have done for me."

Was this joyous creature, full of plans and methods, the timid, frightened creature he had held a year ago in his arms? Was this too Ruth's work, albeit Freia called it nature?

Mrs. Stanton was far more embarrassed with Freia than was her husband or the girl herself, who knew nothing and so had nothing to fear. Mrs. Stanton was unlike any one she had ever seen. She loved to watch her courtly grace; to listen to her terse, pregnant epigrams, which came as naturally to her as commonplaces to others; to find the simplicity, which shone through her varied speech and mood. She had often wondered what a noble royal lady might be like. In her slight reading of novels she had wished she could see one of the sparkling heroines described, and here she was living face to face with one who far surpassed her imaginings.

Mrs. Stanton was amazed at Freia. The girl's fearlessness and enthusiasm, shown by her movements and her quick, animated speech, awoke in her the old desire for an active life. Freia's frank homage to herself gratified her longing for appreciation. It was impossible to

feel that Freia was seeking her because of her son, or even to suspect that she cared for him. If she were concealing her regard for Frank, she acted with a proud and charming unconcern of him which delighted Mrs. Stanton, as indicative of what the girl could do if introduced into society. Freia talked freely with her of her past life, but to Mr. Stanton she unfolded her ardent plans for the future.

The Stantons lingered in the village; its quaintness pleased their taste. Mrs. Stanton possibly considered herself needed as a matron. Frank seldom saw Freia alone, though he was with her all the day as she went on parish errands or walked with his father or talked with his mother. He never thought to watch the trembling of her foot, just discernible under the bottom of her dress, when he came and went, or he might have read differently her apparently frank composure. He began to weigh himself, a new process to him, and to wonder if he were worthy of her. He had entirely forgotten that he had ever wished to marry in her a cause. He loved her now for herself, with all the glorious possibilities for leadership and devotion to others which lay within her.

Neither Frank nor his mother had spoken to each other of Freia. She fancied that he wished she would. She reasoned within herself. If Freia should accept him, her relations to her son would be changed. Now he was hers alone. If Freia should refuse him, he would still be hers; if unhappy, she, his mother, might soothe him; or if he in his despair should go to Europe, she might go with him. She had once given her consent, was not that enough? A year ago she would

have balanced in her mind the advantages in having an orphan girl for a daughter-in-law against the disadvantages of birth and early occupations. Now she had grown beyond such worldly and selfish considerations.

She tried to talk with Ruth about Freia, but Miss Aften discouraged any attempt at such conversation. Why she did so puzzled Mrs. Stanton, who did not yet comprehend how far removed was Ruth's nature from any double motive. Ruth felt that whether or not the friendship between Frank and Freia grew into love, it was a personal relation and with too important results arising from it for any intuition other than a mother's to touch.

Two weeks had gone by since Easter Sunday, and Mrs. Stanton announced her intention of returning to Boston. Frank and his mother glanced at each other for one brief second, like combatants measuring each other's strength. No one knew it; scarcely were they aware of it.

"Will you go to walk with me, if this, then, is to be our last day?" asked Frank of Freia.

"Thank you; I don't see how it is possible. I have promised to get the work ready for the sewing circle, and it will take me all day."

No one but herself was aware of her agitation. Frank was angry, Mrs. Stanton gratified, at such a perfect society manner in Miss Krumm.

"Let me help you with your cutting and basting, Freia," said she.

This was more than Frank could bear. Was his mother after all in league with her against him? And he left the room.

As the two women sat together at the window working, Freia noticed a ring on Mrs. Stanton's finger which she had not seen before. With her pretty air of admiring familiarity, she asked to look at it.

It was a broad gold ring, in which, set with little diamonds, were the words, "*N'auray aultre.*"

"It belonged to my grandmother," said Mrs. Stanton, handing it to her. "It was given her by my grandfather after they had had some misunderstanding with each other and made up. It is said to be the motto, slightly changed in spelling, which Philip the Good adopted in honor of his third wife."

As she saw Frank coming back, she added, quickly, "Give it to him. Tell him I brought it on purpose." And murmuring to herself, clinching her lips, "I have done it," she passed into the hall apparently to speak to Ruth.

Frank had decided that he was a coward and that Freia's behavior was abominable. He was not going home without knowing what she meant. Once before had he come to Mendham meaning to speak, then had gone back without speaking. It was right then because of Brooks; now he would not again be so treated. He was sure she would refuse him, her heart and mind were so full of her plans; still it was impossible for him to wait any longer. For two whole weeks had he controlled himself, in hopes of winning her love. Let her throw it away if she wished. Better to settle down in despair forever than to be in the torture of alternate hope and fear. He found Freia studying the curious inscription.

"Your mother told me to give you this and to say she brought it on purpose."

Frank knew the ring at once. His resentment against his mother instantly vanished. After all, she had spoken for him, though Freia knew it not. He took the ring, hesitatingly, eagerly.

"It has been handed down in the family, by the oldest son, to the girl who loves him. Can you wear it, Freia? That was what my mother meant."

He tried to take her hand. She drew back.

"Surely, Freia, you know how I have loved you these four years, how I have hunted for you, and, when found, how I've waited and waited. Freia, you must love me. I cannot live without you any longer."

A ragged child went by the window leading its drunken father, an unusual sight in the village. Freia pointed to them.

"See, there is my work to do. From attic to cellar in that narrow, dark alley where we lived will I go, till it is bright with cleanliness and happy with employment."

"Let me go with you, Freia," pleaded Frank, humbly. "We can do more together. It shall be joint work and joint leisure. I do not ask you to live as my mother does. Let us make our home where we are needed; only let it be our home, Freia."

She bent her head so low that he could scarcely catch the words, "You do not ask me out of pity?"

"Freia!"

"Nor because you think I love you?"

"I thought you did not. Do you? Will you? I wanted to care for you when your father died; you had

no love in your heart for me then. I came here with Brooks and you were so busy that you had not time to even try to love me. Will you not try?"

He caught her hand, which she had thrown behind her as if supporting herself by its pressure, and tried to put on the ring. Again she endeavored to draw it back. Holding her with his other hand, he pushed the ring down till it fitted close.

She never told him that she had loved him first, and he always said that she never would have taken him if his mother had not spoken for him.

The June beauty had blossomed into the witchery of September's haze; white dahlias and sweet-peas were running an autumn race to see which would reach October first. The hotels at Campobello had opened and closed. Mrs. Stanton's cottage had been more than ever the lounging-place for morning callers and for evening discussions.

Freia had been with her most of the summer, grateful and humble towards her, coy and reserved with Frank, free and happy with Mr. Stanton. Frank was jealous of his father. It was seldom that Freia would walk with him alone. Together the three had climbed Owen Head and explored sunny coves and wet morasses. When Mrs. Stanton did go with them, Frank found Freia's ease and gayety more charming than her tremors with him, which he was too impetuous to understand. He carried his trouble to his mother.

"Be patient, Frank. You never were a girl, to begin with. You have not put yourself in Freia's place and seen how this wonderful life of dual love is transform-

ing her. Trust her. Always, always be her lover, Frank, promise me; I cannot have her life clouded."

"What do you mean?"

She looked at him searchingly. The old love-letters of her youth came to her memory. Whatever distrust life had taught her of others, she would have none of her own son.

"Nothing, Frank, nothing, only remember."

Hand in hand Mr. and Mrs. Stanton watched the September moon rise, and were content with each other. There was a past that neither quite understood. They were grateful that life had treated them as gently as it had, and that it had given them absolution for missing its richness in the past. It mattered but little, now that Mr. Stanton found in Freia the elastic sincerity and buoyant gladness which might have kept youth longer in his frame and heart, and that Mrs. Stanton had found in Frank a reasoned will and a tender sympathy which might have driven away her earlier morbidness. The years before them might not be another twenty-five, and they would go towards the "Golden Gate of Fifty Years" knowing that if not wholly comprehending one another, they yet dearly loved each other.

Frank and Freia were to be married. There had been some question whether the service should be in Miss Aften's church or in the island home. Mrs. Stanton's courtesy forbade any expression of her wish; Freia herself would have preferred Mendham, but when Mr. Stanton said, "I want to give you, my child, to Frank, not Frank to you. Let me give the gift in our own home," she yielded, happy in her sense of being possessed by him.

Ruth was to come to them on this the twofold wedding-day of youth and middle age, for Frank and Freia felt that she alone must speak the words of blessing and prayer, though the English rector must pronounce them husband and wife. The marriage was to take place in the daylight, in the gladdening out-door air, on the piazza which they all loved so well.

Welsh Pool was astir with the coming joy. The herring houses were whitewashed, the drift-wood piles for smoking the herring were straightened, the alder-bushes in the Queen's highway leading down the hill to the Pool were trimmed, the fallen spruce was cleared away, and the holes filled up. The Lubec & Company steamers ran up both the English and the American flags; the little fishing-vessels were drawn up in Friar's Bay; the Owen gates were opened wide; the Tyn-y-Maes and the Tyn-y-Coed steps were thronged with islanders, for every one had known Frank since he was a boy, and had rejoiced in his merry, honest ways. Freia's relatives had been North Road residents, and therefore every one there had a right to claim an interest in the event as much as the Welsh-Poolers.

It was rumored that Frank and Freia were going up to Boston to live in a tenement, with no end of discomfort, all to make other people more comfortable. Report had exaggerated the discomfort, and for tenement could have been substituted the word "flat." Still it was true that they had pledged themselves to make one alley in Boston a wholesome, happy place.

Freia was to take her brother away with her and send him to school. He had had a pleasant wholesome life with the kind fisherman with whom his mother

had left him, hardly realizing the change made by death, and now again to be made by marriage. All he wanted was to come back and be captain of a vessel. A boat was to him what dogs and friends are to others.

It was the sunset hour. A narrow, silver band of light rested on the water's horizon. Above, dove-winged clouds shadowed the bay. In the east, a long line of soft yellow slowly extended beyond Eastport off into the headlands of Nova Scotia. One hill rose up through it and pierced the darkness, the stretch of color broken, it sent up along its length shoots of amber flame, which the opal clouds parted to receive. From tiny fleck to fleck the radiance flew till the heavens were rosy-hued. The ebbing tide paused to receive the waves of color from the sky and carried them back over the bay till the warmth and joy of the sunset found its human echo in the marriage-service.

Then between the hills came a roseate halo. It melted into the sky, it shone down into the waters. In it nestled a little row-boat.

"Ned is there," whispered Margaret Stanton to Ruth.

Ruth held out her arms to him, but went back to her work.

THE END.

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